

SUNDAY SCHOOL JOURNAL

for
TEACHERS
AND
YOUNG PEOPLE.

NEW SERIES.

FEBRUARY, 1886. VOL. XVIII, No. 2.

The Wesleyan Methodist Sunday-School Union.

At the session of the Wesleyan Conference in 1873 a proposition was made to establish a Sunday-School Union. It met with a hearty sanction by the Conference, and during the ensuing Conference year it was discussed by the various District Meetings and approved by them. At the next Conference session in 1874 a formal plan of organization was adopted, and the Connectional Sunday-School Union began its life.

Unlike the Sunday-School Union of the Methodist Episcopal Church, it does not depend for its literature on the Book Concern, but is itself a publishing society—having its own salesroom and its own editors. Its publications are issued under the direction of a subcommittee of the Conference Committee on Education, the Book Steward and Connectional editors being members *ex officio*. It is thus officially united with the Book Concern, and yet its publications are distinct.

The Union has a very beautiful and convenient home in a busy part of the city of London, at No. 2 Ludgate Circus Buildings, E. C. Here, besides the salesroom, there are editorial offices, a library, and a reading-room. Its catalogue of publications comprises library books, books of reference, a number of choice periodicals, and various requisites for Sunday-school work.

The Secretary of the Union is the Rev. Charles H. Kelly, who has for his assistant Mr. William Binns. Both of these gentlemen are well known among our Wesleyan brethren as active and efficient Sunday-school laborers. Through their favor we have received from time to time the very valuable annual reports of the Union, as well as other publications. There are now connected with the Union 6,659 schools, having 125,502 officers and teachers, and 862,279 scholars. Of these there are

connected with the Church 102,388 officers and teachers, and 105,123 scholars. Sessions of the schools are held both morning and afternoon, the average attendance in the afternoon being considerably larger than that of the morning. There are 2,803 Sunday-school libraries, containing 803,753 volumes.

The ten years of the work of the Union show a very gratifying increase in all these statistics. There is also an increase of interest in Sunday-school work throughout the Connection, which cannot be represented by mere numerical signs. The Wesleyan Sunday-School Union has proved itself worthy of a place among the active agencies of Christian work. Its success has demonstrated the wisdom of the men who aided in its organization.

Your Sick Scholar.

THE subject of sickness ever threatens to become a prominent one. What if some pestilence-shadow darken the land! If the wings of the pestilence be not spread over us, other sickness may fatally overshadow us. Now, to the dark shadow of pain Christ opposes the light of his healing, comforting presence. When any home near him grew dark at the approach of sickness, he would take the face that would brighten, the voice that would cheer, and the touch that would heal. Let the Church imitate its adorable Head. The body is the gateway to the soul. The relief of physical pain may open the way for the admission of spiritual truth. The hospital is one excellent agency in a mission station. Whether we show our interest in this subject through our support of a local hospital or our ministry at the bed-side of a friend, let us not forget what is feasible. As Sunday-school workers, let us remember our privilege and our duty. Is any scholar on a sick-bed? Now is the time to

offset shadow with light. Remember such in some friendly inquiry at the door, some suitable delicacy, some well-timed call. Get so near Christ that his spirit shall fill you, his presence kindle your sympathy for souls, the light of his wisdom direct you in all your steps, and then go to that bed-side and let the Christ within shine out in words that like torches shall guide some needy soul to the cross.

Don't Let it Cool.

' It is the hour for casting in the old foundry with its workmen hurrying to and fro in the smoky light, its roaring furnaces, its streams of molten iron that flow out dazzling and white. "Don't let it cool!" is the injunction as the pots of molten ore are borne away. The metal runs easily now, is impressible, and will take delicacy of outline and retain firmness of form as the founders may direct.

"Don't let it cool!" We are thinking now of the Sunday-school. What were Christmas and watch-night, the week of prayer, and the special efforts of January but fires under the cold mass of worldliness and selfishness in the school, bringing the heart into a molten, impressible state? Now is the time when a shape and set may be given to some one's spiritual interests. Don't lose what has been gained. By prayer, by personal appeal, by a careful life, keep up a helpful, saving influence over others. Ah, if we keep our own hearts melted at the foot of the Cross, we shall never need to mourn over the coldness about us! We may have had a good January; let there be a still better February. "Don't let it cool!"

One Sputtering Stick.

"WHAT a bright, flaming fire on the hearth," you exclaim, "throwing out such a warm glow, waving defiantly toward the black chimney its golden banners"—when suddenly, snap—p—p—p! One stick sputters out its ugly disposition with such explosive force that it dulls the cheery glow and cuts down more than one banner of flame. Only one stick that snaps and sputters, sputters and snaps, but it makes its influence felt all through the fire.

Only one sputtering stick in the Sunday-school or church, one uneasy, fretful, fault-finding, snappish disposition, but what harm it can do! It can send genial Sister A— home with a clouded face and knock away the hopes of warm-hearted Brother B—. Do smother that sputter for the sake of all that is hopeful! Keep—still.

But Brother B—, and Sister A—, do not be discouraged. The more that hemlock-soul crackles and snaps, be all the more hopeful and cheerful. We have seen the snap in more sticks than one killed out by the steady burning of the logs about

it. Opposite every sputtering soul accumulate the flame of more love, more hope, more faith. It will not need any great prophet to foretell the end.

A Disorderly School.

[A correspondent who is an active and efficient Sunday-school officer, having occasion to travel on business last summer, visited a number of Sunday-schools in various parts of the country. He sends us the following report of one, the location of which shall be nameless. In a note accompanying he states that this is a fair sample of many schools he visited. This is greatly to be regretted. We commend the report to the attention of all superintendents. Is your school like this?]

INSPECTOR'S REPORT OF SUNDAY-SCHOOL AT ———,
August, 1885,

Attendance—about 250.

Helps used—JOURNALS and Leaves—No Bible seen.

Singing—Moody and Sankey book.

Order—Very poor.

Attention to Teachers—Poor.

Singing—Slow.

Noise—Large amount.

School opened five minutes after the announced time by the ringing of the bell. Scholars hanging around the door walking in and out. Bell tapped three times. Superintendent says, "We must have order," and immediately announces the hymn. Singing led by a quartet of elderly persons, who sing lustily.

In the meantime scholars are walking in, classes are arranging the chairs for study. Prayer comes next, followed by the reading of the lesson from the leaves. During the class-teaching, secretaries, treasurer, and librarian visit the classes and interrupt the teaching. Then re-assemble, sing three hymns; treasurer reports missionary collection as running continually behind; no allusion to it from the desk. The school is dismissed by bell. The first five classes wait for signal and go out orderly. After that the superintendent has quick work to keep up with the classes in the bell ringing.

Recommendations for all schools of similar irregular habits:

1. Commence on time.

2. Wait for orders.

3. At the opening, close the doors and allow no one to enter until after the opening prayer.

4. Let the superintendent announce the lesson to be read as found in the chapter and verses in the Bible, not in the leaves. Use the Bible on the desk, and provide Bibles for the scholars.

5. Arrange some other time for the officers to transact business with the scholars than during the lesson hour.

6. Dispense with the loud quartet and give the children a chance to sing.

7. Ask the pastor to give a five-minute practical talk on the lesson. If he wont, let the superintendent do it himself. To do this necessitates study of the lesson and prayer.

8. When allusion is made by the treasurer that collections are falling off, supplement that report by a word of encouragement.

9. If no other plan can be devised to dismiss the school than by ringing the bell, see that it is rung intelligently, and not with a confused jumble of sounds. A better way is to dismiss as at Church service, by the benediction by the pastor; or by a verse repeated by the school; or by a prayer of two minutes by the superintendent.

In order to carry out these recommendations successfully, the co-operation of pastor, officers, and scholars must be secured. To do this, weekly teachers' meetings should be held.

Human Nature in the Bible.

BY REV. D. H. WHEELER, LL.D.

ONE purpose of revelation is to make us acquainted with ourselves. Long ago Sir John Davies wrote:

"We that acquaint ourselves with every zone,
And pass both Tropics, and behold the Poles,
When we come home are to ourselves unknown,
And unacquainted still with our own souls."

The lines were written when the geographical discoveries which proved the earth to be a globe and filled men with wonder and the spirit of adventure, were fresher facts. Davies died in 1626, when the trackless deep had yielded up its most distant shores. But the enthusiasms of the last quarter of a century very well parallel those which the poet touches with his swelling notes. We build iron ships, iron roads, bridges of vast span, we invent telegraphs and telephones, we study the earthworms and the pigeons, we scrutinize the sun and speculate upon a new light in Andromeda, we dare the belief that the climate of a continent may be changed by management of the Gulf Stream—and yet we know ourselves so little that only the divine voice is heard revealing our true character. It may be after all that "the proper study of mankind is man," that to know ourselves is the most important and most necessary knowledge, that all other wisdom has value only in relation to, and subordination to, self-wisdom.

We meet men who pride themselves on knowledge of human nature. We analyze it and find that it consists of familiarity with a few of the weaknesses of humanity, of arts of deception, or flattery, or conquest. It is pitifully narrow, and is seldom of general application; some men can be so and so deceived; some women can be thus and thus conquered. It is a dirty knowledge, and concerns itself chiefly with degraded views and objects of life. We praise this or that writer for knowledge of human nature; we commonly mean that he knows a little of the myriad-workings of the heart of man.

The instances of praise show that we esteem self-knowledge, which is a knowledge of human nature, and that any measure of it, however small, is proof of peculiar penetration; that it is easier to "pass both Tropics and the Poles," the sun and the new star in Andromeda, than to know one's own heart. What reverence should we give to a living man of whom it could be said: "He knew what was in man!" What a wonder would he be among the sons of men who knew all the secrets of all men, and could read off their frailties and their strengths! There are still men who have their craniums carefully manipulated to obtain a map of their qualities and powers. We eagerly desire self-knowledge; we are ready to pay a price for it. We praise it wherever we seem to see it in others. And yet we will not get it from the one Book which contains it all, which is a chart of every man's character and life—a full and detailed statement of all our weakness and all our strength, of our glory and our shame, our degradation and our exaltation.

We sometimes say that the purpose of the Bible is to reveal God and his will. It is a very inadequate account. It also reveals ourselves to ourselves. It is only in full view of our origin and destiny, our fall and our recovery, our relations to divine law and immortality, that we can begin the lessons of self-knowledge. The primer of human nature is in these facts of our origin, nature, and duties. To ignore all these is to build a house without any foundation—that is, not to build it at all. The divine facts encompassing human life are first facts; we must begin with them or remain a mystery to ourselves. Take them all away and humanity and its life remains an inexplicable entanglement, a labyrinth out of which no man can find a path. Men begin self-knowledge with an acquaintance with the divine foregoings and surroundings of our being. These make a foundation, a primer; they are the elements of self-wisdom.

Can the study be carried further. Yes, to all lengths. God and *men* are in the Book. And what a vast company of men! These thousands of men lived in a far-off age and land. We are not allied to them by any secular bond; and yet it is the perpetual wonder of this Book that we find ourselves in them, and know ourselves through their histories. They give us photographs of our own souls; they cast the lead to the bottom of our natures. They stand in the divine light, and are revealed in their relations to the primary divine elements of human being. They think, feel, strive, win, lose in the atmosphere of unchanging realities. And yet each separate man is clothed with a distinct and even obtrusive personality. Even nameless persons who seem but to flash through the story are living persons who can never, while the Book lives, die out of human knowledge. We know "the father of the child" whom the disciples could not heal, though few words are spoken by him. We know them all. We know that we might have filled their places; nay, we know that we play their parts.

And these characters of Scripture are so numerous and so varied that they reveal our inner lives at all points and to all depths. Our limited space forbids illustration here. It was the charm of the preaching heard in our boyhood that it laid men's lives open by use of the personal experience in the Bible. Perhaps an increase of such preaching in this age would be more refreshing for faith than "doubtful disputations" and fine-wrought speculations. The man is in no danger of shooting too high who steadies his sermon by Bible characters. The fact that they interest us is proof of their veracity, of their likeness to ourselves. They are the abiding humanity, the unchanging nature which we bear in all ages. They are good and bad; there is never any doubt which. They are true to life, to our life as to their own. We know ourselves in knowing them. For we are of like passions and of like wants and destinies with them all. The differences are faint lines; the resemblances are large type.

Contagious Diseases and the Sunday-school.

BY W. B. TRITES, M.D.

A FATAL case of malignant scarlet fever recently occurred in my practice, which was clearly traceable to the Sunday-school which the child attended. In this school I found that no particular effort was made to protect the scholars from contagious diseases; children from families in which they prevailed were found in attendance and freely associating with the other scholars. When the attention of the superintendent was called to the danger, he acknowledged its existence at once, and stated that he had not thought of it before, and hence had taken no steps to protect his school.

This experience has led me to write this article asking the attention of Sunday-school officers to the importance of protecting their pupils from contagious diseases. Some optimist may think that anxiety here is uncalled for, that the parents of children where pestilence exists will keep them at home; but let him ask his family physician if people are always careful in such matters? If our experience is not exceptional, the answer will be that it is often difficult to get even the intelligent to obey such restrictions, while among the ignorant the most stringent rules are disregarded. Such negligence is not universal, we admit, but it is common enough to lead Sunday-school officers to take every precaution to protect the children placed under their care. To aid them in this work we would offer the following suggestions:

1. Occasionally the superintendent should announce that children in whose families contagious diseases exist must not come to school. Let him at the same time explain the danger of spreading these diseases and the suffering and sorrow which might follow.

2. Teachers should make particular inquiry as to

the nature of sickness occurring in their classes. If contagious cases are discovered they should be reported at once to the superintendent, so that he may see that other children of the family remain away.

3. Children from families in which contagious diseases have prevailed should not be permitted to return until a certificate is received from the attending physician stating that the danger of contagion no longer exists.

4. When contagious diseases are epidemic circulars should be distributed among the scholars, to be taken home, calling attention to the danger of spreading contagious diseases and asking the co-operation of the parents in preventing the same. Such circulars should state the diseases which are believed to be contagious, for many are ignorant on this point. The Board of Health of Philadelphia classes the following named diseases as pestilential or contagious: Asiatic cholera, relapsing fever, yellow fever, typhus or ship fever, spotted fever, small-pox, varioloid, scarlet fever, diphtheria, and measles. To this list we would add whooping-cough.

It is a matter of surprise to the writer that while health boards make the most stringent rules for the prevention of the spread of disease in our public schools, they entirely overlook the necessity of enforcing the same precautions in Sunday-schools. Seven millions and a half of human beings in the United States are connected with Sunday-schools; how important that precautions should be taken to preserve their health as well as to save their souls! If officers are convinced that the danger referred to exists, we hope they will at the next session of their schools announce rules for the protection of their scholars from contagion. Do this at once, for you may thus save some precious life which has been committed to your care.

Studying Quickly.

BY REV. J. I. ROSWELL.

GENTLE reader, did you ever use the type-writer? If not, then when you first tap the keys you fancy that you can never learn, and, if you could, what use would it be when you can drive the pen so swiftly? You make so many blunders, and the work of learning goes on so slowly, that you are inclined to say, "Why waste time and patience over another Yankee invention?" Courage and patience! First be thorough and slow, and then time will teach you to be thorough and rapid.

This last remark applies to nearly all our work in life, and it certainly applies with emphasis to the study of the Sunday-school lesson. The person who would teach must first study, and study, to one who is not used to it, is a slow and tedious process. Courage and patience! Master the lesson even if the process be a slow one, and time and practice will increase your rate of speed.

Every student should first try to do his work

well, and should not stop there, but try to do it speedily. It is said that there is no theoretic limit to the speed of a steam engine, and be assured there is none to the speed of the mental operations. The machinery may work slowly at the start, but its speed should grow with each revolution. Bible students should remember this, and coax their minds to work rapidly. Learn to read by sentences as you have already read by words, and grasp quickly the main truths of the lesson. Absorb in a few minutes what will help you in the writings of others, and reject what you do not need. Try to cultivate sound judgment, and what little imagination you may have be sure to rouse into action. Be at your best when you come to the study of the lesson, and you will find that rapid work, if you are well trained, is not of necessity poor work. Life is brief, there is much to be done, and what we do we must learn to do quickly.

Hiding the Word.

As workers in the Sabbath-school we study the word of God, but do we hide it in our hearts? "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee," says the psalmist. Psa. 119. 11. Do we thus hide it? We may have the "word" in our pockets, on our library tables, in our heads, without having it in the heart.

During the war, on the eve of battle, our soldiers would throw away their packs of playing cards and thrust their New Testaments into their breast pockets; but it availed little to have the written Bible in the pocket, while in the heart were profanity, dissoluteness, and ungodliness. A pack of cards would serve as well to arrest a bullet as a Testament. The pocket is a good place for the Bible, but to have the Bible in the pocket is not enough. The Bible lies upon the table of many a man unopened. The table is a fitting place for the Bible, but the Bible unread on the table brings no man nearer to God; and so it is, that a man may give his life to the merely intellectual study of the word of God, studying it as he would Homer, Hesiod, or Tacitus, without receiving its teachings into his soul. It is true of men at the present day that they actually do this, and it may be that Judas Iscariot read the Scriptures just as much as did Simon Peter or John. We have no reason to believe that Saul of Tarsus was more learned in the Scriptures than Caiaphas the high-priest; but Caiaphas's knowledge of the Scriptures did not keep him from condemning to death the Lord of life and glory.

What we want is the hiding of God's word in the heart—not like the wedge of gold hidden by Achan under his tent, an inert, lifeless thing buried in the earth, but rather as the planting of a living seed, having within it a living germ, in the mellow earth. The heavens shower down their rains, the sun sends forth his warming beams, the winds fan it, and it grows and bears rich fruit. So if we have within our hearts God's word, the living germ of a

holy life, pervading our being and supplying the motive of our emotions and actions, the dews of God's grace water it, the Sun of righteousness shines upon it, the Spirit's influences nurture it. Thus our lives become beautiful with the rich graces of Christian living, goodness, holiness, usefulness.

As teachers in the Sabbath-school we are compelled to study the word of God. While studying it we should make it our aim, our constant earnest endeavor, that the very life of that word may be hidden within our souls, that we ourselves may be enriched by it, and so may be enabled to enrich others. The teacher whose soul is not informed by the vital truths of the Gospel can impart little to the scholar; but he who feeds upon God's word, who meditates in it and lives by it, has that to bestow which learning in all the languages, living and dead, cannot confer. Let us then so hide the blessed truths of God's revealed word in our very heart of hearts that from us shall flow "rivers of living water."—*Westminster Teacher.*

Christ-Like Brotherliness.

THERE is a very common sort of religious living which strengthens selfishness. It climbs the mountain-top and there builds its tabernacle, sitting and singing its hymns about heaven and crying deliciously over them. It cannot think how any body can like to go down among those dreadful lepers and frightful demoniacs and outcast women, and the noisy and vulgar people. Be quite sure that the highway of holiness does not lead us up there for a dwelling-place. It takes us down into the market-place, and teaches us to do our business there, honestly and generously, as we would be done by. It takes us into the lanes and byways of the city, and teaches us to see in every want and every sorrow a claim upon our pity and help. It takes us home, and helps us to remember how the children feel, and to consider the neighbors and servants. This is what we are to set before us as the outcome of our faith and prayer, a *gracious considerateness for other people*. And that not as busybodies, much less as patrons, but with a simple Christ-like brotherliness, a considerateness that does not only concern itself about men's souls and that which helps them heavenward, but which runs through all the commonest rounds and ways of the daily life. We are to carry such a sense of indebtedness to our dear Lord and Master that we shall be always trying to find opportunities and outlets to bless others; we are to live finding in all the daily intercourse with men a hundred fresh channels by which the Father's love may flow into their midst. For his sake, for the sake of others, for our own sakes, let us strive after this as the fairest and only satisfying token of a holy life—this unflinching brotherliness.—*Rev. Mark Guy Pearse.*

REFRESH your memory with good things daily.

Man's Mortality.*"For to me to live is Christ."*

[The following poem is justly considered a poetical gem of the highest order. The original was found in an Irish MS. in Trinity College, Dublin. It is supposed by some to have been written by one of the primitive Christian bards about the year 554, and to have been sung and chanted at the last grand assembly of kings, chieftains, and bards, held in the famous Halls of Tara. The translation is by Dr. Donne.]

Like a damask rose you see,
Or like a blossom on a tree,
Or like the dainty flower in May,
Or like the morning to the day,
Or like the sun, or like the shade,
Or like the gourd which Jonah made:
Even such is man, whose thread is spun,
Drawn out and out, and so is done.
The rose withers, the blossom blasteth,
The flower fades, the morning hasteth,
The sun sets, the shadow flies,
The gourd consumes, the man—he dies.

Like the grass that's newly sprung,
Or like the tale that's now begun,
Or like the bird that's here to-day,
Or like the pearly dew in May,
Or like an hour, or like a span,
Or like the singing of a swan;
Even such is man, who lives by breath,
Is here, now there, in life and death.
The grass withers, the tale is ended,
The bird has flown, the dew's ascended,
The hour is short, the span not long,
The swan's near death, man's life is done.

Like to the bubble in the brook,
Or in a glass much like a look,
Or like the shuttle in weaver's hand,
Or like the writing on the sand,
Or like a thought, or like a dream,
Or like the gliding of the stream:
Even such is man, who lives by breath,
Is here, now there, in life and death.
The bubble's out, the look's forgot,
The shuttle's flung, the writing's blot,
The thought is past, the dream is gone,
The waters glide, man's life is done.

Like an arrow from a bow,
Or like a swift course of water flow,
Or like the time 'twixt flood and ebb,
Or like the spider's tender web,
Or like a race, or like a goal,
Or like the dealing of a dole:
Even such is man, whose brittle state
Is always subject unto fate.
The arrow shot, the flood soon spent,
The time no time, the web soon rent,
The race soon run, the goal soon won,
The dole soon dealt, man's life soon done.

Like to the lightning from the sky,
Or like a post that quick doth hie,
Or like a quaver in a song,
Or like a journey three days long,
Or like the snow when summer's come,
Or like a pear, or like a plum:
Even such is man, who heaps up sorrow,
Lives but this day, and dies to-morrow.

The lightning's past, the post must go,
The song is short, the journey so,
The pear doth rot, the plum doth fall,
The snow dissolves, and so must all.

"Worn-Out Superintendents."

WHY not? Men wear out in every other department of labor. Ministers wear out; teachers in secular schools wear out; men in all kinds of business wear out. Why should not superintendents of Sunday-schools also wear out? We do not inquire here why they wear out, or how they wear out; but if men wear out every-where else, why not in this place also? We accept the fact that they do, and regret it, but do not know how to prevent it. A Sunday-school teacher writes us: "Our superintendent is an old man. He has been superintendent of this school for twenty-five years, and is worn-out. He prays always the same prayer, goes through the same routine, and closes with the long meter doxology. He is a good man, and we do not want him displaced, but it is very hard on the school. What shall we do?"

This is not a solitary case in point. We often hear similar complaints. Perhaps the worn-out superintendent built up the school at first, and has sustained it by his efforts for years. It would be a most ungracious thing to turn him out abruptly. The pastor should be consulted in such cases, as the nomination of superintendent is with him. Perhaps the best thing to do would be to give the old man a live young man as assistant superintendent. There are cases, however, where the only remedy is a change. The preacher in charge should speak kindly to the worn-out incumbent, and if he is sensible he will resign. If he refuses to do so, then the Quarterly Conference has the remedy in its hands. It is a delicate subject, and often complicated by local relations and influences which must be understood and respected in any judicious management of the case. Old men are sometimes mistaken in thinking they are as capable as they ever were. Young people are sometimes mistaken in thinking they would do better if the old ones were out of the way.—*Sunday-School Magazine.*

A VERY skillful and successful teacher of children is wont to express her indebtedness for much of her success to the following rules, which were first put into this shape by Jacob Abbott:

"When you consent, consent cordially." "When you refuse, refuse finally." "When you punish, punish good-naturedly." "Commend often." "Never scold."

A Plea for the Children.

BY MRS. D. P. KIDDER.

SINCE the subject of temperance is one in which the destinies of so many children in our Sunday-schools are involved, is it not wise to consider the question whether the Sunday-school is doing all that it can and ought to do to instill temperance principles into the minds and hearts of those who are now receiving its instructions, and also to impress them with the danger of even tasting of the intoxicating cup?

Temptation to other sins may lie in wait for many children, but every child, especially in our large cities, must run the gauntlet of liquor-saloons, if temptations to drink do not also come to him through the allurements of fashion, and with the luxuries of home. Where danger is so imminent, and its approaches are so deceptive, should there not be corresponding faithfulness in pointing it out, and in endeavoring to impress the truth that safety is absolute only when total abstinence is practiced?

Many have thought temperance instruction in Sunday-schools impracticable unless special lessons were devoted to it. But there are few Sunday-school lessons which will not admit of illustration or application by means of pertinent temperance facts. Indeed, one of the most efficient modes of teaching is that prescribed by Scripture in the words, "here a little and there a little." It is alike available to superintendent and individual teachers. Surely Sunday-school superintendents can command a few minutes sometime during the session for admonition and instruction on a theme that affects so deeply the weal or woe of the scholars. If he wishes incidents to illustrate the manifold evil consequences of intoxicating drinks, he need only clip from the daily and weekly newspapers the affecting instances that are constantly occurring as a result of this dreadful evil.

Any one who would thus compile the facts of a single year would never lack striking illustrations that could not fail to arrest the attention, and fasten upon the memory of children. Also, how frequent are the opportunities in the life of a teacher when just some such a "word in season" is wanted.

Should not the importance of this subject be considered in teachers' meetings, and every teacher be made to feel the responsibility of doing all that can be done to render the children strong to resist this insidious destroyer?

Dr. Holland says in his plea for instruction on this subject in the public schools: "It is a cruel thing to educate a boy in such a way that he has no adequate idea of the dangers that beset his path. It is a mean thing to send a boy out to take his place in society without understanding the relations of temperance to his own safety and prosperity, and to the safety and prosperity of society."

"Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways." Psa. 139. 3.

Another Practical Suggestion as to the Lesson.

BY MARGARET MEREDITH.

That system of learning a Sunday-school lesson in which you give your comments upon each verse or clump of verses as it is read has, for those of you who take notes for your teaching, one great advantage. This is, that it enables you to look at your notes without bad effect. Otherwise, you instinctively shrink from referring to them after you are fairly launched off on the full tide of the lesson, even though you may hold them in your hand. But you glance down quite naturally to get the number of the verse which you wish read, and that glance gives you also your intended comments and questions. Vary your methods, but this has seemed to me a method which it is well to use frequently.

Opening and Closing Services for First Quarter of 1886.**OPENING SERVICE.**

- I. SILENCE.
- II. THE DOXOLOGY.
- III. RESPONSIVE SENTENCES.

SUPT. I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.

SCHOOL. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth.

SUPT. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber.

SCHOOL. Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.

SUPT. The Lord is thy keeper: the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand.

SCHOOL. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.

SUPT. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul.

SCHOOL. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore.

IV. SINGING.

V. PRAYER.

LESSON SERVICE.

- I. CLASS STUDY OF THE LESSON.
- II. SINGING LESSON HYMN.
- III. RECITATION OF THE TITLE, GOLDEN TEXT, OUTLINE, AND DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION, by the school in concert.
- IV. REVIEW AND APPLICATION OF THE LESSON, by Pastor or Superintendent.
- V. THE SUPPLEMENTAL LESSON.*
- VI. ANNOUNCEMENTS (especially of the Church service and week-evening prayer-meeting).

CLOSING SERVICE.

- I. SINGING.
- II. RESPONSIVE SENTENCES.

SUPT. My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

SCHOOL. Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.
- III. DISMISSION.

THE APOSTLES' CREED.

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord: who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead, and buried; the third day he rose from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

* Special Lessons in the Church Catechism may here be introduced.

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS.

FIRST QUARTER: THREE MONTHS' STUDIES IN JEWISH HISTORY.



B. C. 590.]

LESSON VI. THE FIERY FURNACE.

[Feb. 7.]

Dan. 3. 16-28.

[Commit to memory verses 16-18.]



16 Sha'drach, Me'shach, and A-bed'ne-go, answered and said to the king, O Neb'u-chad-nez'zar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter.

17 If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.

18 But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

19 Then was Neb'u-chad-nez'zar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Sha'drach, Me'shach, and A-bed'ne-go; therefore he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated.

20 And he commanded the most mighty men that were in his army to bind Sha'drach, Me'shach, and A-bed'ne-go, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace.

21 Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

22 Therefore because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Sha'drach, Me'shach, and A-bed'ne-go.

23 And these three men, Sha'drach, Me'shach, and A-bed'ne-go, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

24 Then Neb'u-chad-nez'zar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counselors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king.

25 He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.

26 Then Neb'u-chad-nez'zar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake, and said, Sha'drach, Me'shach, and A-bed'ne-go, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither. Then Sha'drach, Me'shach, and A-bed'ne-go, came forth of the midst of the fire.

27 And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counselors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was a hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them.

28 Then Neb'u-chad-nez'zar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Sha'drach, Me'shach, and A-bed'ne-go, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God.

General Statement.

At the close of his campaigns, when Nebuchadnezzar was at peace in his palace, he resolved to commemorate his conquest of the East by a great religious festival. He erected upon a plain near his capital a gigantic image of gold, perhaps in honor of the sun-god Bel, and summoned all the rulers and nobles of his empire, from the Tigris to the Nile, to bow before it. But while a thousand knees were bent in adoration, there were three young men who stood erect, and refused to sanction the worship of an image. They were the three Hebrew youths who had been companions with Daniel. Their leader was not with them, perhaps because the magi to which he now belonged were recognized as a separate order, and were not present among the secular

officers of the realm. The conduct of the three Jews made them conspicuous in the prostrate throng, and was duly reported to the king. They were summoned into the royal presence, and commanded to bow before the image, or to endure the agony of being thrown into a furnace of fire. But the courage which dared to stand alone against the current of custom, which could resist the idolatrous and licentious associations of a court, did not blanch under the anger of a king, and the threat of death. Promptly they chose the furnace rather than the crime of disloyalty to God. The fire was kindled, and piled higher than its wont, and they were thrown into its blazing depths. But a divine form walked beside them, and they stood unharmed amid the flames.

Explanatory and Practical Notes.

Verse 16. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These were three young Hebrews, who were with Daniel, and like him promoted to important positions in the state. Their Jewish names, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, had been changed by King Nebuchadnezzar.

Answered and said. The king inquired of them whether the charge was true, that they had failed to bow down before the great golden image. **Nebuchadnezzar.** He was the son of Nabopolassar, the founder of the Babylonian Empire, and reigned from 604 to 568 B. C. He raised Babylon to the height of its power, built its gigantic walls, and reared its hanging gardens. He was a mighty conqueror, a wise and statesmanlike ruler, but in character a thoroughly Oriental despot. **We are not careful.** Rev. Ver., "We have no need." That is, "there is no use in discussing the question. Your mind is settled, and so is ours." Notice how openly and squarely these young men met temptation. They did not offer to compromise or try to avoid conclusions, but spoke out decidedly. (1) *All honor to the young man who dares to say "No."*

17. If it be so. If it be that those who will not worship must be thrown into the furnace. **Our God is able to deliver us.** The only question in their minds was not whether God was able, but whether they were worthy of his power. **The burning fiery furnace.** Such cruelties were not uncommon in the East. A picture at Nineveh shows two men being burned alive, their tongues having first been torn out. **He will deliver us.** This was the utterance of strong faith, for there is no hint of any divine revelation. (2) *Learn to trust God in the deepest trials.*

18. But if not. They believed that God would deliver them; but even though he should not, their purpose was the same. They were not of the class who serve God only while it seems to be for their interest. **We will not serve thy gods.** It was apparently a small matter to bow the knee; but that meant a profession of service which these conscientious young men would not make. **The golden image.** It stood on the plain of Dura, near Babylon, and with its pedestal, was nearly a hundred feet high. Herodotus says that he saw in Babylon, about a century after this, a statue of solid gold eighteen feet high; and King Xerxes took from one temple in the same city gold to the amount of eighty-six million dollars; so that the statements concerning this image are not incredible. (3) *Let us not only avoid evil, but, like these youths, avoid the appearance of evil.* (4) *We should not be ashamed to let men see that we are on the Lord's side.*

19. Full of fury. An absolute monarch, he had never before been addressed in this manner, nor met such determined resistance to his will. **The form of his visage.** The face is often the index of the soul, and reveals the thought within. **Heat the furnace one seven times.** The number seven signifies completeness, and this means no more than that the furnace was to be made as hot as possible; but this only made the deliverance all the more signal. (5) *The schemes of wicked men only result in the greater glory to God's name.*

20, 21. The most mighty men. The task of throwing these victims into the fire was a dangerous one, as the result proved; hence the selection of the strongest soldiers. **Bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats.** Rev. Ver., "their hosen, their tunics, and their mantles." There is a difference among expositors as to the precise articles of dress referred to. The first may indicate the flowing trousers, the second the under garment reaching to the knees, and the third the outer robe. Just as they were standing in their garments of state they were seized and bound. **Cast into the midst.** It was probably in the form of a pit, into whose opening they were thrown. (6) *There is a fire which is hotter and burns longer; may we escape its burning!*

22. The king's commandment was urgent. Compelling the executioners to hasten, even to the risk of their own lives. **Slew those men.** They were perhaps smothered by the smoke as they approached too near the edge of the pit. If both these men and the

Hebrews had perished, this event would have seemed accidental; if both had escaped, some critics would have claimed that there was only a pretense of obeying the command; but when the young men escape unharmed in the fiery depths, on whose border the mighty men are slain, the hand of God is clearly revealed.

23. Fell down bound. We cannot, even in thought, place ourselves in the condition of these heroes. They were ready to give up their lives for conscience' sake. (7) *What self-denial are we willing to offer for right and duty?* **Into the midst.** The Septuagint, or Greek translation of the Old Testament, inserts at this place a hymn said to have been sung by these young men in the furnace; but it contains no evidences of inspiration. It may be read in the English Apocrypha.

24. Then Nebuchadnezzar. As soon as the fire had abated sufficiently for him to approach the furnace and look within it. **Was astonished.** An old word for *astonished*. **Said unto his counselors.** The nobles who were at all times in attendance upon the king. **Did not we.... They answered.** Thus the testimony of the king receives confirmation from his council, who joined in the command and witnessed the event.

25. Lo, I see four men loose. It may be asked why the laws of nature were superseded for these men, and not for Ridley, Latimer, and many more martyrs who have died at the stake. In some ages God's cause needs evidences, in other ages exemplars. In one case God gives supernatural proofs; in the other, sublime characters. **Walking in the midst.** They trod the burning coals at ease, content to remain there until summoned forth. **The form of the fourth.** Rev. Ver., "the aspect of the fourth." The miracle was not in the presence of the heavenly being, for that is always given to God's people when they need it, but in the manifestation of it to the king's senses. Spiritual things are seen only by men in a high spiritual state, but occasionally, as here, and to Elisha's servant (2 Kings 6, 17), a revelation is granted to people of lower nature. **The Son of God.** Rev. Ver., "a son of the gods," which is more correct, since Nebuchadnezzar could not know of "the Son of God" as we understand him. He meant a divine being or an angel. See ver. 28. Perhaps it was the Angel of the Covenant, the pre-incarnate manifestation of Jesus Christ. (8) *Those who suffer for Christ's sake shall have his presence with them.*

26. Came near. When the heat had sufficiently subsided to allow a nearer approach. **Ye servants.** He now speaks respectfully to those whom a while before he had abused. (9) *God shall yet make all his faithful ones honorable before the world.* **Most high God.** Perhaps he had felt a contempt for Jehovah as the God of the Jews, unable to protect his city against the Chaldeans. See verse 15. Now he honors that God, as most high, above even his own Bel, the god of Babylon.

27. Princes, governors, and captains. These titles in the Rev. Ver. are given as "satraps, deputies, and governors." They were the officers of the realm, gathered from the various provinces. By them the news of this event was carried throughout the empire, and thus the very means employed to honor the idol only resulted in the greater glory to Jehovah. **Saw these men.** Their divine companion had now disappeared; indeed it is not stated that either the three Hebrews or the Chaldean nobles saw him. **Nor was a hair.** The fire had not even scorched their hair nor their garments; an emblem of the greater fact that their characters had remained unspotted from the wickedness which surrounded them in the palace.

28. Then Nebuchadnezzar spake. These words of the king are not to be understood as meaning that he became a worshiper of the God of Israel. He merely recognized him among the objects of worship in his dominions, and forbade the persecution of his servants. **Changed the king's word.** Have set aside his command and compelled its alteration, a very unusual event in an Oriental monarchy.

HOME READINGS.

- M.* The fiery furnace. Dan. 3, 16-28.
Th. Consigned to the fiery furnace. Dan. 3, 1-27.
W. The Spirit, the speaker. Matt. 10, 16-27.
Th. The strong deliverer. Gal. 1, 1-20.
F. The Comforter and present Help. Isa. 43, 1-7.

- S.* Worship due to God. Deut. 10, 12-22.
S. Trust, and the joy it brings. Psa. 34, 1-22.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace. Dan. 3, 17.

LESSON HYMN. L. M. 61.

Hymnal, No. 608.

Faith of our fathers! living still
In spite of dungeon, fire, and sword:
O how our hearts beats high with joy
When'er we hear that glorious word:
Faith of our fathers! holy faith!
We will be true to thee till death!
Our fathers, chained in prisons dark,
Were still in heart and conscience free:
How sweet would be their children's fate,
If they, like them, could die for thee!
Faith of our fathers! holy faith!
We will be true to thee till death!

TIME.—Perhaps 580 B. C. In Greece, the 50th Olympiad. Year of Rome, 174.

PLACE.—Same as in Lesson V, also plain of Dura.

RULERS.—Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, and all the lands from the Tigris to the Mediterranean. Apries, or Pharaoh-hophra, king of Egypt. Astyages, king of Media and Persia. Solon, legislator at Athens. Servius Tullius, sixth king at Rome.

CONNECTING LINK.—The four young Jews have been elevated to posts of power. Nebuchadnezzar is absolute monarch of the Oriental world. Elated at his own greatness, he has set up an image in Babylon to which all must bow on pain of death. God chose three of these faithful young Jews to teach the great king that Jehovah alone was God.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—The Son of God.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. The Faithful Three, v. 16-18.

What caused the answer with which the lesson begins?

What did they mean by saying, "We are not careful to answer thee?"

In what two ways did they show their faith?

What is faith as defined by the Epistle to the Hebrews? Heb. 11. 1.

How was the truth of that definition exemplified by the faithful three?

2. The Fiery Furnace, v. 19-23.

With what expectation were the three young men cast into the fiery furnace? 1. On their own part? ver. 17. 2. On the part of the king?

What reason had he for his expectation? ver. 22.

What reason had they for their expectation? 1 Sam. 17. 37.

What was the effect of the fire on them? ver. 25.

3. The Form of the Fourth, v. 24, 25.

What appeared unto the spectators of this scene?

What was the effect upon the king?

Did the king mean what we would mean if we said, "The Son of God?"

What was the probable appearance of this fourth form in the furnace?

How did he appear to John on Patmos? Rev. 1.

4. The Triumph of Faith, v. 26-28.

What was the end of this wonderful scene? ver. 26.

Who saw the "coming forth?"

What testimony did the king give to their fidelity?

Can you recall any other scenes of imminent peril from which God's servants have issued triumphant?

Practical Teachings.

It is better to suffer with Christ than to be in favor of the world.

Here is an example of simple trust; of foolish anger; of the presence of God with his people. We do not read that the faithful three saw the form of the fourth, but he was there. Is he at our side? Matt. 28. 20.

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. The Faithful Three, v. 16-18.

Who were "the faithful three?"

To whom did they make reply?

What did Jesus advise his disciples to do in such a case? Matt. 10. 19.

Of what did the three assure the king?

In whom did they trust for deliverance?

What was their final determination?

2. The Fiery Furnace, v. 19-23.

What effect had their reply on Nebuchadnezzar?

How did he show his anger?

Whom did he summon as executioners?

What command was given them?

What was done with the three friends?

What befell their executioners?

3. The Form of the Fourth, v. 24, 25.

What question did the king ask?

Whom did he see in the furnace?

What was their condition?

Whom did he suppose the fourth person to be?

What does David say of the righteous? Psa. 34. 7.

4. The Triumph of Faith, v. 26-28.

What did the king command?

What harm had befallen the friends?

What was the king's testimony?

Teachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson do we find—

1. Faith in God's power to save?

2. Fidelity to duty at whatever cost?

3. Divine help in trouble?

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

What did Nebuchadnezzar make? An image of gold.

What did he command? That every one bow down and worship it.

Who refused to do this? Daniel's three companions, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.

What heathen names had been given them? Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

Why did they stand, when all the people fell down before the image? They only bowed down to Jehovah the living God.

What did the king threaten to do? To cast them into the fiery furnace.

What was their reply? (Repeat the GOLDEN TEXT.)

What did they tell the king? "We will not serve your gods."

What order did the king give? To heat the furnace seven times hotter than ever before.

Who bound and cast them into the furnace? The strong soldiers of the army.

What happened? The fire killed the soldiers.

What did Nebuchadnezzar see in the flames? Four men walking about.

What was one like? The Son of God.

Whom did the king call to come out? Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

What did the king and his chief men see? That they were unharmed by the fire.

Of what was he sure? That their God was greater than the golden image.

Words with Little People.

Would you be willing to be *blamed* or *hated* or *punished* or *laughed at* if you *knew* you were doing *right*? Are you willing to bear trouble for Jesus' sake? The path of duty sometimes leads God's children into *fiery trials* in these days, but nothing can harm them with such a blessed GOLDEN TEXT to trust in.

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

[For the entire school.]

1. What command was given by King Nebuchadnezzar? That all should worship a golden image.

2. What was the penalty for refusing to worship the idol? To be thrown into a burning fiery furnace.

3. Who were the only ones that did not worship the image? Three young Hebrew captives.

4. What did they say to the king, as given in the Golden Text? Our God, etc.

5. What became of them when they were thrown into the furnace? They walked safely in the fire.

6. Whom did Nebuchadnezzar see standing with them? One like the Son of God.

TEXTS AT CHURCH.

Morning Text.....

Evening Text.....

ANALYTICAL AND BIBLICAL OUTLINE.

The Deliverance.

I. THE THREE.

1. We are not careful to answer, v. 16.

"Take no thought how....ye shall speak." Matt. 10. 19.

2. *Our God... is able to deliver.* v. 17.
"The Lord stood with me." 1 Tim. 4. 17.
3. *We will not serve thy gods.* v. 18.
"Little children, keep yourselves from idols."
1 John 5. 21.

II. THE TRIAL.

1. *Bound in their coats.* v. 21.
"Being persecuted, we suffer it." 1 Cor. 4. 12.
2. *Cast into the midst of... furnace.* v. 21.
"Ready, not to be bound only.... die." Acts 21. 13.
3. *Loose, walking in the fire.* v. 24.
"Not strange concerning the fiery trial." 1 Pet. 4. 12.

III. THE FOURTH.

1. *Lo, I see four men.* v. 25.
"Persecuted, but not forsaken." 2 Cor. 4. 9.
2. *Like the Son of God.* v. 25.
"I am with you always." Matt. 28. 19.

IV. THE WITNESSES.

1. *Nebuchadnezzar the king.* v. 24.
"We wrestle.... against the rulers." Eph. 6. 12.
2. *His counselors.* v. 24.
"The wicked plotteth against the just." Psa. 37. 12.
3. *Princes, governors, and captains.* v. 27.
"They glorified God in me." Gal. 1. 24.

THOUGHTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

The Service of God.

1. We notice that these who served God under such trying circumstances were *young men*. Hence they form a noble example for youth. If they could be faithful, any young man can be.

2. They were without many advantages which young people now enjoy in God's service. They had no church to attend; perhaps no Bible to read, certainly none of the clear light which streams from the New Testament; no companionship of believers to strengthen them. They were alone, yet they served God. Cannot we be faithful to him with all the helps to religion which we enjoy?

3. They were brought into opposition with the strongest forces in their service of God: with popular opinion, with the royal authority, with the danger of death. Yet they were true to their convictions. May not their example encourage us?

4. In the service of God they showed the noblest traits of character, courage, principle, obedience to God, and faith. See how these traits were manifested, and resolve to imitate them.

5. In the service of God they enjoyed God's care, God's presence, and God's protection. We, too, may enjoy these rewards in living for God's cause.

6. Notice, too, the results to others that came from their service of God. Their influence brought honor to God, and led others to worship him. From every follower of Christ goes forth an unconscious influence in favor of his cause.

An English Teacher's Notes on the Lessons.

BY SARAH GERALDINA STOCK.

The Golden Text sufficiently indicates the line to be adopted in this lesson. It gives the reply of three young Jewish captives to a scornful question put to them: "Who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?" The question is in the form of a challenge, and this challenge is taken and

accepted without hesitation. The subject falls into four divisions.

1. The challenge itself.

A challenge is often a friendly invitation to a trial of strength. This one is of a very different character. It is the haughty utterance of a claim to universal superiority. The man who utters it is the greatest sovereign of the ancient world. Daniel himself, by divine inspiration, accorded this place to King Nebuchadnezzar. Chap. 2. 38. Victorious over the nations around him, and despotic in his own kingdom, he thought no power or dignity could compare with his own. And to this he gave expression in erecting the colossal image on the plain of Dura. The idea may have been suggested to him by the words of Daniel: "Thou art this head of gold;" for it was probably intended as a representation of himself, like the images erected in later times by the Roman emperors, or the hat of Gessler in the story of William Tell. Whoever refused to accord to this figure the desired homage was to be cast into a "burning fiery furnace."

Three did so refuse. But the king, instead of condemning them unheard, questions them on the matter and gives them the chance of escape if they will conform to the royal edict, and concludes with the words quoted above. In these words he challenges the three men to find any Power that can successfully oppose his will, or hinder the accomplishment of his commands.

2. The men who received the challenge.

They were great officers of the king, high up in his service, and probably in his favor. But they were captives. They belonged to an alien and a subject race. They were objects of envy and dislike to the king's own countrymen, the heathen Chaldeans, possibly on account of their upright administration of the charge committed to them. Chap. 2. 49. They had not an earthly friend to look to; for David was probably absent at the time, or he would have been involved in the same peril as themselves, and their other countrymen and co-religionists were powerless to help. The very esteem and favor in which they stood with the king would now be turned into greater wrath that they had ventured to defy his authority. These men were challenged to find a God that should deliver them from the hands of the king. There they stood, prisoners before him—the furnace near at hand all ready to receive them. And their God had not yet interposed. We must bear in mind also that we have no record of their receiving divine revelations, such as were made to Daniel. They were not prophets—only three young Jews who worshiped the God of their fathers.

3. How the challenge was taken up.

When Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal they began to call loudly on their God. They worked themselves into a frenzy in their desire to gain what they wanted. How different the conduct of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego! Their answer is quiet, calm, unflinching. They accept the challenge, and will abide by the issue. "He will de-

liver us." Of this they are sure, though they do not know how. Whether their lives are to be preserved they cannot tell, but they do know that the king can touch their bodies only, and that but for a time.

The king proceeds to work his will. The prisoners are bound and carried to the seven times heated furnace. Does this look like deliverance? The flames have slain even the executioners—what then of the victims who have fallen into them? Perhaps curiosity, perhaps a feeling of uneasiness, leads Nebuchadnezzar to gaze through an aperture to see if his victory is complete. But what a sight! Ver. 25. It is the full answer to the challenge. Here is the God who delivers.

4. *The issue of the challenge.*

The king goes forward himself to prove if the thing is really true, or if it is a vision. And at his call the captives come forth out of the furnace. What have the flames done to them? Loosed their bands; that is all. And Nebuchadnezzar himself declares that the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego has delivered his servants who trusted in him.

Let us see in the challenge made by Nebuchadnezzar the type of another challenge offered, day by day, in the midst of us.

Who offers it? The world, or, we may say, the "god of this world." The world extols its pleasures as the keenest, its honors as the highest, its wealth as the most real, its approval as the thing most to be coveted, its power and its authority as the thing to be recognized. Its language is, in fact, this: What has religion (that is, God) to offer in comparison with my gifts? and how can religion (that is, God) hinder my will? Let us translate this into ordinary familiar speech: "You'll never get on if you can't do as others do." "What is the good of being so strict? you'll only make yourself disliked." "You can't carry out those ideas; they won't do here." This is what the world says. That is its challenge.

Who is to take it up? It is to those who live in the world, those who are seemingly bound by its circumstances, its limits, its possibilities, that the challenge comes. It comes to the rich and poor, learned and unlearned; it comes to the young, the inexperienced, the simple, the friendless, saying to them: "Who is to help you if you go contrary to me?" Which of us has taken, will take it up?

How will it be decided? Not always as we think. In the old fairy tale the good boy quickly gets his reward. It is not so here. It is in the enduring, in the suffering of his servants that God shows he is able to deliver. It was when Paul was "troubled on every side, yet not distressed," etc., that the "life of Jesus was made manifest" in him. 2 Cor. 4. 8-11. Whoever will take up the challenge for God must be willing to endure hardness. But none ever went into a furnace, even the mildest, for Christ's sake, without finding his presence there. And the full answer of manifested deliverance will be given in God's good time.

Berean Methods.

Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

Review the previous lesson, and show in it the conduct of these three young men....A series of word-pictures might be given: 1. The great image on the plain, with the multitudes around it—king, nobles, band of music, rulers, etc. 2. The music sounds, and all the throng falls prostrate. All? No, we see three standing erect. What a contrast! 3. The furious king, and the three standing before him. 4. The fiery furnace, flames leaping up, soldiers seizing the three, casting them in, etc. 5. The "form of the fourth," and the king looking on. 6. The three brought forth, wonder of beholders, proclamation, etc....The Thoughts for Young People will also furnish a line of teaching....Do not fail to show the elements of character manifested by these young men....This is a familiar story, and therefore let the teacher bring it forth from the class in preference to telling it to them....From what is our God able to deliver his children now? From sin, from temptation, from suffering, from death.

References. FREEMAN'S HAND-BOOK. Verse 20: "Mighty Men," 592. Ver. 21: Various garments, 593.

Songs from the Epworth Hymnal.

- 133. How firm a foundation.
- 144. The Christian's hiding place.
- 157. O holy Saviour.
- 161. In the secret of his presence.
- 176. All the way my Saviour leads me.
- 179. Since Jesus is my friend.
- 182. Never alone.
- 184. Safe in the arms of Jesus.

Primary and Intermediate.

BY M. V. M.

LESSON THOUGHT. *The Mighty God.*

THE KING AND HIS POWER.

Tell that Babylon was the capital of Chaldea, and one of the finest cities that was ever known. A little talk about the city with its famous hanging gardens, its beautiful streets and squares, etc., may interest the children. Tell of the great king who lived there, his wealth, power, etc. Ask if he had real power. Make a great heart on the board. Print inside it, "I, the Great King!" Teach that when we see ourselves great, or good, or wise, there is no place left in the heart for God. He only is great, good, and wise, and he wants all the room in the heart. Tell of the setting up of the image of gold, more than a hundred feet in height, and the command that all the people should worship it, or be burned to death in a furnace of fire. Show that this was the king's way of getting himself worshiped. He wanted every one to obey him—not the Lord.

THE KING'S SERVANTS.

Make another large heart, and print inside it, "God, the Great King." Give the names of the three Jews who believed this, and let children tell what they have heard about them. Ask who was their King, and if it was right for them to disobey the king of Babylon. Teach that we must obey God first, and ask what he has said about worshipping false gods. Tell the story of the refusal of the Jews to worship the image, the king's anger, and the casting into the fiery furnace.

THE KING OVER ALL.

Show that Nebuchadnezzar thought that he had all power. God only is powerful, and he is on the side of those who obey him. Tell how he, the great God, was with his servants in the fire, and did not let it hurt them, and how the king of Babylon had to see that the

King of heaven was greater than he. Tell how the king, his princes, and nobles, and captains, all saw that the fire could not hurt those who obeyed God, and notice the result of the obedience of the three.



hold fast to him. What we must do is to let God have his place in our hearts.

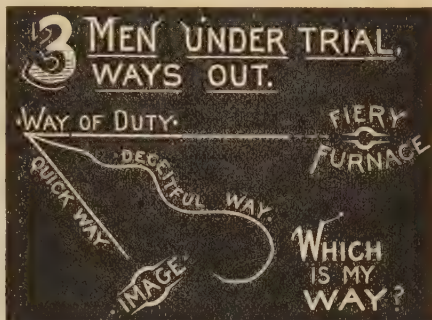
Lesson Word-Pictures.

A wide, level plain, a great, golden image, and a vast crowd! That all? No; a band of music, and a flaming, dazzling furnace to receive those not worshipping the idol. But hark! The band is playing and the people are falling before the golden image. But see! One, two, three, stand upright, stiff as the old oaks that refuse to acknowledge the power of the wind humbling pine and birch. And the three are Jews, those despised Jews! O what a bluster when they are discovered! They are seized, hustled before the king, who frowns and fumes and asks for an explanation and demands obedience! Hush! The three Jews are to give their answer. What will they say? Such stillness everywhere! No sound but the crackling of the flames in the fiery furnace craving some hotter work to do. And now comes the calm, firm reply of that Jewish conscience knowing how to dare and maintain: "We will not serve thy gods." O how angry is the king! Is the king the furnace, so red is his face with wrath? Furnace now shall be king, of the three Jews at least. Heat it up! More wood, more! Hotter, hotter, hotter! Now give the flames some of that tough fuel, a Hebrew conscience, and see what they will do with that. In with them, in with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego! What a raging fire! Its outstretching tongues lick up and devour the men who brought the Jews to the furnace, as if stubble of the field, and they perish. But the Jews who fell into the flames, their poor hands helplessly bound—what has happened to them? Why does the king look so astonished? Why does he rise in haste? What wonder does he witness? A wonder it is. Their fetters burnt away, those flames resting upon them as if only some careless, unfelt drapery of gold, they rise and walk about, exultant, free, like crowned kings. Are they not in kingly company? Lo, vision of the furnace-hour, that vision of the Fourth One, the Son of God! "Come forth!" cries the king. Like conquerors, they come forth, and how the people crowd about them—kings, nobles, every body! See! They are feeling eagerly the clothes of the Jews, touching their hands, looking into their very faces for some trace of the fire.

Blessed be God, the fire had gone over them harmless as the light that streams upon us out of the West!

Blackboard.

BY J. E. PHIPPS, ESQ.



SUGGESTION. If you have colored chalk, draw the straight line across the board with white, the down line with red, the crooked line with brown. Do this, and write the words after the figure 3 before the school assembles.

EXPLANATION. The white line is the straight path of Christian duty. It turns neither to one side nor the other. It leads to suffering in this instance, as it has done many times since. The red line is a short one, going straight down to idolatry. The brown and crooked line is the winding, deceitful way that leads at last to the golden image.

QUESTIONS. How many men refused to worship? [Three.] What was their condition? [Under trial.] What had they to decide? [A question of right or wrong.] What had they to do? [Bow down.] How many ways out of the difficulty? [Three.] What are they? [Name them.] What was the shortest way? [Idolatry.] Not taking that way, what might they have done? [Appeared to comply.] That would have been—? [The deceitful way.] What did they do? [Took the way of duty.] Where did that lead? [Straight to the fiery furnace.]

APPLICATION. Every day we are called upon to decide the question of right or wrong. Which way do you take out of it?

THE ALTERNATIVE.

BREAK IT	2nd C O M M A N D , T.	KEEP IT
AND LIVE.		AND DIE.
WHAT WOULD		YOU DO?

B. C. 538.]

Dan. 5.1-12, 25-28. [Commit to memory verses 3-6.]



1 Bel-shaz-zar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand.

2 Bel-shaz-zar, while he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Neb'u-chad-nez-zar had taken out of the temple which was in Je-ru-sa-lem; that the king and

his princes, his wives and his concubines, might drink therein.

LESSON VII. THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL.

[Feb. 14.]

3 Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was at Je-ru-sa-lem; and the king, and his princes, his wives and his concubines, drank in them.

4 They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone.

5 In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote.

6 Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote against another.

7 The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chal-de'ans, and the soothsayers. And the king spake, and said to the wise men of Bab'y-lon, Whosoever shall read this writing, and show me the interpretation thereof, shall be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.

8 Then came in all the king's wise men: but they could not read the writing, nor make known to the king the interpretation thereof.

9 Then was king Bel-shaz'zar greatly troubled, and his countenance was changed in him, and his lords were astonished.

10 Now the queen, by reason of the words of the king and his lords, came into the banquet house: and the queen spake, and said, O king, live forever: let not thy thoughts trouble thee, nor let thy countenance be changed:

11 There is a man in thy kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of thy father

light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him; whom the king Neb'uchad-nez'zar thy father, the king, I say, thy father, made master of the magicians, astrologers, Chal-de'ans, and soothsayers:

12 Forasmuch as an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams, and showing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Dan'iel, whom the king named Bel'-te-shaz'zar: now let Dan'iel be called, and he will show the interpretation.

25 And this is the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN.

26 This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it.

27 TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.

28 PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Per'si-ans.

General Statement.

The Babylonian Empire stood in power for nearly a century, but its hour of doom came, as that of Nineveh had come before. A new conqueror arose, greater than even Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus the Persian. He united under one crown Persia, Media, Lydia, and then led his victorious army against Babylon, the queen-city of the East. He was resisted for a time by Nabonadius, the king of Babylon, who in the later years of his reign associated with himself his son Belshazzar. One by one the provinces fell into the hands of the conqueror, and at last Babylon itself was entered by the treachery of its defenders. On the very night of the attack, Belshazzar, relying upon his strong walls, was reveling with his court in a great banquet. As if to show contempt for the God of the captive Jews, the sacred vessels from the temple were standing upon the tables, and

were employed in drinking to the gods of Babylon. Suddenly a great hand was seen opposite the king's seat, and an inscription was written upon the wall. There was something in the manifestation so supernatural that the king's heart sank with terror, and his knees trembled. The magicians were summoned, but they failed to read the mysterious letters, either from fear, or from ignorance, or because their eyes were blinded. At last a summons was sent to Daniel, who was now in old age, and neglected by the court. He came, and declared to the king and his company both the inscription and its meaning. His prophecy was verified in that same night, when the Persians penetrated to the royal palace, and slew the king. The empire of Babylon passed away, and that of Persia arose in its stead.

Explanatory and Practical Notes.

Verse 1. Belshazzar the king. He was the son of Nabonadius, the last king of Babylon, and three years before the fall of the city was associated with his father in the government. His age at the time of the lesson could not have been more than eighteen years. **Made a great feast.** Perhaps from blind security, perhaps from bravado, the young king held his revel in a beleaguered palace. (1) *There are young men now who are pleasuring on the brink of ruin.* **To a thousand of his lords.** Such large companies could be easily assembled in one of those palaces, whose extent is yet a world's wonder. We read of a feast of Alexander the Great where ten thousand guests were gathered. **Drank wine.** As may be seen depicted on the walls of Nineveh, the Oriental banquets were often scenes of drunkenness and debauchery. (2) *How closely wine is associated with every thing evil!*

2. While he tasted the wine. Perhaps in a sober hour he would not have ventured thus to affront the God whom a part of his subjects worshipped. **The golden and silver vessels.** The cups and dishes used in the sacrifices, and perhaps the golden censor and the candlestick. **His father Nebuchadnezzar.** It is uncertain whether Belshazzar was a descendant of Nebuchadnezzar; but if not lineally, he would receive the title, as Jehu is called "son of Omri" on the Ninevite monuments, though belonging to a different dynasty. **Out of the temple.** They had been taken from the temple about fifty years before, but were destined to be soon restored by the conqueror of Babylon. **His wives and his concubines.** One word refers to the queens of the highest rank, who were few in number; the other to the wives of inferior order, who were very numerous in the court of an Oriental king. It was not usual for women to be present at banquets, and only when the feasting degenerated into revelry were they introduced. (3) *How swiftly do sins lead to lower and viler sins!*

3, 4. Then they brought the golden vessels. The design was to cast contempt upon Jehovah, the God of the Jews, as being unable to protect his people and his treasures from Merodach and Bel, the gods of Babylon. Yet their very act became the means of bringing glory to God and shame to the idols! **Gods of gold, etc.** In all ages and among all ignorant peoples there has been a craving for a visible object of devotion. Even now, the Romanist must have his crucifix, and the

ritualist his altar. (4) *Let us seek a knowledge of God as a Spirit, who is real though invisible.*

5. In the same hour. Contrast the wild scenes below, the marching hosts without the wall, the solemn picture above. **Came forth the fingers.** Fingers of a hand, with no arm and no body in sight, moved by unseen power along the palace wall. No wonder the heart of the young king was frozen with fear! "That divine hand that had written the two tables for a law to his people now writes the doom of Babel upon the wall."—*Lightfoot.* **Against the candlestick.** Some expositors consider this a reference to the golden candlestick from the temple, but it is not certain. **Upon the plaster.** The wall was not sculptured or draped, but smooth, like many of the walls seen in the ruins of Nineveh. **The king saw.** Probably the nobles also saw the inscription, though it is not so stated.

6. Countenance was changed. Paleness succeeded the flush of wine upon his face. **His thoughts troubled him.** (5) *So there will come a time when every sinner's guilty conscience shall be his accuser.* **Knees smote.** By a remarkable action of the nerves, the knees seem to tremble in moments of extreme terror.

7. The astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. These were the "wise men," or *magi*, who are often referred to in Oriental history. The first name refers to those who used incantations and charms; the second points to the priestly class, to which the term Chaldeans was applied because they originally sprung from that race; the third means particularly the astrologers, who drew conclusions from the stars. **Clothed with scarlet.** Rev. Ver., "purple;" the royal color, worn only by kings. **Chain of gold.** Not only as an ornament, but as a badge of office. **Third ruler.** Why not the second? Simply because Belshazzar himself was the second ruler, being joint king with his father Nabonadius. Thus out of the buried monuments of the past arise testimonies to the truth of Scripture.

8. They could not read the writing. Reasons have been given as follows: 1. The letters may have been in an older or Hebrew form, differing from the Chaldaic, as Anglo-Saxon differs from English. 2. They may have been written in some mysterious hieroglyphic, which Daniel only was enlightened to translate. 3. Perhaps the magicians could read the letters, but

could not interpret their meaning, which was expressed in such concise form. 4. They may have been so paralyzed by terror at the supernatural sight as to be unable to think or to speak at all.

9. 10. Greatly troubled. More than ever alarmed, when he found his wisest men in as deep darkness as himself. **His lords were astonished.** Rev. Ver., "perplexed." Vague alarm filled every mind, and perhaps the sound of the approaching enemies may have been heard. **The queen.** This was the mother of Belshazzar, who and she probably a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar. Nabonadus, the father of Belshazzar, was a usurper, who married into the royal family in order to strengthen his title. **By reason of the words.** The knowledge of the events in the banquetting room reached the queen in her own apartments, and led her to come to the king.

11. There is a man in thy kingdom. Daniel was now more than eighty years of age, and had probably withdrawn from public affairs for some years. There are a few hints that perhaps Daniel within the city had been aiding the Persians without, and therefore had kept aloof from the court of Nabonadus and Belshazzar. **In the days of thy father.** Belshazzar, through his mother, was either the grandson or great-grandson of Nebuchadnezzar. **Light and understanding.** In her earlier days, the queen-mother may have heard of Nebuchadnezzar's dreams and their interpretation by Daniel. See chaps. 2 and 4.

12. An excellent spirit. That is, the endowment of genius and wisdom, which God had bestowed upon Daniel. They came, however, as the result of study and thought, though God's gift. **Whom the king named Belteshazzar.** See chap. 1. 7. The name means "Whom the god Bel favors." **Now let Daniel be called.** We see in this the authority of a queen-mother, which in all Oriental lands is very great. (6) *The young West may wisely follow the hoary East in reverence for parents.* The succeeding verses, which should be read both by the teacher at home and in the class, relate Daniel's appearance and his bold address to the young king.

25. This is the writing. Only four words, yet each has in it a page of meaning. **Mene, Mene.** "Numbered, numbered." The first word was doubled for

emphasis, because the fulfillment was immediately at hand. **Tekel.** "Weighed." This (correctly *thekel*) is the Chaldee form for the Hebrew word *shekel*, "a weight," for all ancient money was weighed. **Upharsin.** "And divided." The *u* is "and," *pharsin* means "breakings," "dividings." There is perhaps in the word a play on the name of the Persians, who were at that moment accomplishing the divine sentence.

26. This is the interpretation. Even when the words are read and translated they require an explanation. **God hath numbered.** The work of the Babylonian Empire had been wrought. It had been God's unconscious agent to discipline his people, and now being itself unworthy, it was no more needed when the discipline had been completed. (7) *There is a King who reigns above the empires of the earth.*

27. Thou art weighed. Not only Belshazzar, but also his kingdom and his people, were held to a strict account for their privileges. The empire, honored with the task of executing God's purposes, chastising unworthy nations, and consolidating the lands for future time, had failed to recognize its vocation and obligation, and its destiny had turned to doom. **In the balances.** The standards by which men are judged are not their own opinions of themselves, nor the world's estimate of them, but the calm, impartial judgment of the Lord, expressed in the enlightened conscience, in God's word, in the decisions of the judgment day. (8) *Let us keep ever in view God's standard of character, and not the world's.* (9) *Nations, no less than individuals, are held to an account.*

28. Peres. This is the same word in meaning with *upharsin*, in verse 25, the *u* meaning "and," and *pharsin* being the plural form of *peres*, "division." **Divided.** Not meaning that the kingdom of Babylon was to be divided between the two conquering nations, but that it was to be destroyed, broken up, and become their prey. **Medes and Persians.** Two races having close affinity, living on the plains east of the Zagros Mountains, the Medes on the north, and the Persians on the south. They were united under Cyrus the Persian, and conquered all the countries from the Indus to the Nile, forming the greatest empire of the ancient world. It lasted from 538 to 330 B. C., when it was conquered by Alexander the Great.

HOME READINGS.

- M.* Handwriting on the wall. Dan. 5. 1-12; 25-28.
Tu. Dream of Nebuchadnezzar. Dan. 4. 1-8.
W. The dream interpreted. Dan. 4. 19-27.
Th. The interpretation fulfilled. Dan. 4. 28-37.
F. One found wanting. Matt. 19. 16-26.
S. The handwriting read. Dan. 5. 13-24.
S. A strife for the mastery. Luke 13. 24-30.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. Dan. 5. 27.

LESSON HYMN. L. M.

Hymnal, No. 1017.

The day of wrath, that dreadful day,
 When heaven and earth shall pass away!
 What power shall be the sinner's stay?
 How shall he meet that dreadful day?
 When, shriveling like a parched scroll,
 The flaming heavens together roll;
 And louder yet, and yet more dread,
 Swells the high trump that wakes the dead!
 O, on that day, that wrathful day,
 When man to judgment wakes from clay,
 Be thou, O Christ, the sinner's stay,
 Though heaven and earth shall pass away!

TIME.—538 B. C. In Greece, the 60th Olympiad. Year of Rome, 215.

PLACE.—Same as in Lesson V.

RULERS.—Belshazzar, last king of Babylon, 555-538 B.C. Cyrus, king of the Medes and Persians. Servius Tullius at Rome. Ptolemy, tyrant of Athens. Amasis, king of Egypt.

CONNECTING LINK.—Nebuchadnezzar has been dead many years. The last of the race is upon the throne. Cyrus invests Babylon, Darius being in com-

mand of the army. Daniel is still living, an old man. There is a scene of revelry in Babylon. The city is believed to be impregnable. The lesson story follows.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—The omnipresent God.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

- 1. A King's Feast, v. 1-4.**
 On what night did the king's feast take place?
 What was going on outside of Babylon while the city was feasting?
 In what way was the past history of the Jews suggested by this feast?
 What must have been particularly offensive in the sight of God in using these sacred vessels thus?
 What light does this scene shed on the character of Belshazzar?
- 2. A King's Fear, v. 5-9.**
 What changed the feast of mirth to a feast of fear?
 Who saw the handwriting? Be sure to find *all*.
 Why could not the king's wise men read it?
 How did the king display his anxiety to know the portent of this?
 What shows that the conscience may be awakened at times even in a wicked man?
- 3. A Queen's Counsel, v. 10-12.**
 What does the queen's speech show concerning Daniel?
 What other instance in Bible history of a prime minister of one king being entirely forgotten by later monarchs?
 What testimony does the queen bear to Daniel's character and acquirements?
 What does the queen's knowledge of Daniel's past show concerning her own present relation to the kingdom?
- 4. A prophet's Warning, v. 25-28.**
 What was the prophet's warning?
 What was the effect on the king?
 What influence did it have on Daniel's future?
 Where was this prophecy fulfilled?

Practical Teachings.

Sin will be surely punished. Belshazzar desecrated golden and silver vessels only. We desecrate, what? God's name? God's law? God's day? Fearless Daniel! He spoke the truth no matter what the consequence. Do we?

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. **A King's Feast**, v. 1-4.
What king made a feast?
To whom was it given?
What did Belshazzar do openly at this feast?
What did he order to be brought before him?
What use did he propose to make of them?
In whose service had these vessels been used?
How were these vessels now defiled?
2. **A King's Fear**, v. 5-9.
What sign of warning did the king see?
What signs of fear did he show?
Upon whom did he call for help?
What did he desire of them?
What reward did he promise them?
What was their success?
What effect had their failure on the king?
3. **A Queen's Counsel**, v. 10-12.
What brought the queen to the banquet?
What words of cheer did she give the king?
Whom did she counsel him to consult?
4. **A Prophet's Warning**, v. 25-28.
What did Daniel declare the words to be?
What was the meaning of each word?
What brought this penalty upon Belshazzar?

Teachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson do we find—

1. That debauchery makes men bold in sin?
2. That wicked boldness makes guilty fear?
3. That defiance of God brings ruin?

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

- What king made a great feast for his lords? **Belshazzar.**
For what did he send to hold the wine? **The gold and silver vessels of the temple of God.**
To whom did they all offer praise? **To their gods.**
What was seen the same hour? **A hand, writing on the wall.**
How was the king affected? **He trembled with fear.**
For whom did he send? **For all the wise men of the land.**
What did he want them to do? **To read and explain the strange words.**
Who was then sent for? **Daniel.**
What were the words he read? **"Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin."**
What did he tell Belshazzar? **That he had dishonored God.**
Whose hand did he say had written these words? **The hand of the living God.**
What did they mean? **That God had taken his kingdom from him.**
For what reason? **Because he has lived in sin and idolatry. (Repeat the GOLDEN TEXT.)**
What is sure to lead people into trouble? **Sin, because it leads them away from God.**

Words with Little People.

Found wanting.	Found not wanting.
A king who was	A little child who is
Proud,	Humble,
Willful,	Obedient,
Forgetful of God,	True to God,
Careless,	Careful,
Profane,	Holy.
Intemperate,	Temperate,
Slain.	Saved.

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

[For the entire school.]

1. Who was Belshazzar? **The last king of Babylon.**
2. What appeared while he was feasting? **A hand which wrote on the wall.**
3. Who alone could read the writing and its meaning? **Daniel.**
4. What did the writing mean as stated in the Golden Text? **"Thou art, etc."**
5. What took place on that night? **King Belshazzar was slain.**
6. By whom was his kingdom taken? **By the Persian.**

TEXTS AT CHURCH.

Morning Text.....

Evening Text.....

ANALYTICAL AND BIBLICAL OUTLINE.

"Weighed and Rejected."

I. THE SINS.

1. **Pride.** "*Made a great feast.*" v. 1.
"Hast not humbled thine heart." v. 22.
"Proud in heart....abomination." Prov. 16. 5.
2. **Drunkenness.** "*Drank wine.*" v. 1.
"Be not drunk with wine." Eph. 5. 18.
3. **Sacrilege.** "*Vessels....out of the temple.*" v. 2.
"No fear of God before his eyes." Ps. 36. 1.
4. **Idolatry.** "*Praised the gods.*" v. 4.
"Stretched out....to a strange god." Ps. 44. 20.

II. THE JUDGMENT.

1. *Came forth the fingers.* v. 5.
"The triumphing of the wicked is short." Job 20. 4.
2. *His thoughts troubled him.* v. 6.
"Fear, and the pit....are upon thee." Isa. 24. 17.
3. *Cried aloud to bring in the astrologers.* v. 7.
"Stand now with thine enchantments." Isa. 47. 12.
4. *They could not read the writing.* v. 8.
"That turneth wise men backward." Isa. 44. 25.

III. THE SENTENCE.

1. *Mene: God hath numbered.* v. 26.
"I remember all their wickedness." Hosea 7. 2.
2. *Tekel: Thou art weighed.* v. 27.
"According to their deserts will I judge." Ezek. 7. 27.
3. *Peres: Thy kingdom is divided.* v. 28.
"I will execute judgment." Ezek. 25. 11.

THOUGHTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

The Judgments of God.

1. The judgments of God come upon those who live in pleasure without thought of eternal interests and dangers. Belshazzar was feasting, when he ought to have been watching, and like him are many.

2. The judgments of God come upon the drunkard and the licentious. Both the Bible and ancient history relate that drunkenness and lust were the crimes which led to Babylon's overthrow. If our land perishes it will be from the same cause. Let us avert the doom by destroying the curse of intemperance.

3. The judgments of God come upon those who scoff at God and his word. Belshazzar's sin is committed by every one who blasphemes God and rails against God's truth. Let the swearer and the scoffer beware!

4. The judgments of God always come suddenly. An hour, and the feast became a scene of death. So the sinner in a moment may pass out of hope into despair.

5. The judgments of God come forewarned, though men will not always hear the warning. God's messengers, his word, his Spirit, are ever endeavoring to awaken men to their danger, but they refuse to listen.

English Teacher's Notes.

In our last lesson we saw how a daring challenge was thrown out by a monarch, confident in his own power; and how this challenge was accepted and answered, and the challenger forced to confess his error. To day we are to consider an act yet

more daring and impious, and the summary vengeance of Jehovah upon it.

The Book of Daniel passes over the immediate successors of Nebuchadnezzar, and goes on to his grandson Belshazzar, the son of Nabonnedus, who was associated with his father in the empire. The glory of the Chaldean monarchy had culminated in Nebuchadnezzar, to whom Jehovah had given the principal countries and kingdoms into subjection, for the fulfillment of the divine purposes. Jer. 27. 5-7. He and his son and his son's son were to reign supreme until the "time of his land" came. Meantime a new power began to rise up in the East, the kingdom of the Medes and Persians, which was to take the place of the Chaldean. At the time to which the commencement of our passage refers, the Persian general, Cyrus, was actually besieging Babylon, and the elder king, Nabonnedus, was absent. Confident, however, in the strength of his city and its fortifications, Belshazzar the king instituted a great festival, probably in honor of the chief god whom he worshiped, on a scale unusually large and magnificent.

But the distinguishing feature of this festival was not its splendor, nor the number of the guests. It was an act of deliberate insult and blasphemy offered on the occasion to Jehovah, God of Israel. Belshazzar could not have been ignorant of the dealings of Jehovah with his grandfather, Nebuchadnezzar, nor of the distinct recognition by the latter of the divine supremacy. Yet he carried his arrogant defiance of Israel's God to lengths his father had never reached. The palace of the king of Babylon could not be poor in any thing that was wanted to grace a festival. Yet Belshazzar must needs have the gold and silver vessels, which had been taken from the temple at Jerusalem, brought out for the use of himself and his guests. The sacrilege was committed wantonly and purposely, and out of these sacred vessels the wine at that banquet was drunk to the honor, moreover, of the "gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone." Such a thing had never taken place before. The pride and the assumption of Babylon had reached its culminating point.

But at this point the sentence which long ago had gone out against the city (Isa. 14. 4, etc., 47; Jer. 50. 51) was brought forth into the light. "In the same hour," while the sacrilegious banquet was in full swing, there "came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote." The seeming triumph which Belshazzar was celebrating over the worship of Israel's God could only touch the outward signs of that worship. The very power and authority of Jehovah were manifested in the awful appearance which startled the revelers. On the wall where were usually recorded the titles and exploits of the king, an unknown Power was inscribing strange and threatening characters.

For threatening he felt the words to be, although from their being written (as is supposed) in the Hebrew character, neither Belshazzar nor his wise men

were able to decipher them. And so the blasphemer had to turn to the prophet of Jehovah (who had been forgotten by all but the queen—probably the queen-mother) to interpret the inscription. It contained but three words, one being twice repeated. And these declared—

The end of the kingdom. The "time" spoken of by Jeremiah was come. The city of Babylon was still wealthy, still magnificent, still given up to pleasure, still seeming impregnable. Yet God had "numbered the kingdom and finished it."

The failure of the kingdom. It was the belief of the ancients that the actions of the dead were weighed in a balance, and their doom pronounced accordingly. The power and supremacy of Babylon had been the gift of Jehovah, and this gift had been terribly abused. "Weighed" in the divine balances it was "found wanting."

The fate of the kingdom. The word *Upharsin*, *dividers*, is explained by the word used by Daniel, *Peres*, *divided*, both being derived from the same root. The great empire was to be dissolved, and become the prey of the enemy then before the gates, who were even now preparing to enter the city through the empty channel of the river, which they had diverted from its course. In a few hours the doom had been fulfilled! Babylon had fallen.

This striking and terrible story gives the teacher an opportunity for speaking of the future which is rapidly drawing near. In the story of Belshazzar we see

The pride of this world.

There is so much in the world to attract young people that they need a plain and simple warning about it. Its wealth, pleasure, distinction, power, look very inviting to them. Tell them plainly that "the friendship of the world is enmity with God." Jas. 4. 4. Those who are not with Christ are against him. Matt. 12. 30. The world first neglects, then defies, then blasphemes God. In this it will grow worse and worse. But notice

The sentence upon this world.

It is already written. While men are boasting of their discoveries, their learning, their intellect, and throwing scorn on the word and the ways of God, they do at times catch glimpses of the Hand that writes, in strange and threatening characters. Sickness, loss of friends, sudden danger, all bring them such a glimpse. And they tremble, like Belshazzar. And the sentence is this: "Numbered and finished." 1 John 2. 17. "Weighed, and found wanting." Matt. 18. 23, 24. "Dissolved." 2 Peter 3. 10, 11.

The end of this world.

It will come as surely as the fall of Babylon when men are least prepared. But the word of God warns, and invites, and pleads with men to come out from it. Christ still receives those who are "found wanting." And the day which brings destruction to his enemies will bring joy to his redeemed.

Berean Method.

Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

Explain who Belshazzar was, and his position in the kingdom. Call attention to the discoveries at Babylon revealing his name and his relation to the last king, Nabonadius....The scene within the walls of Babylon, the feast, the company, the sacred vessels....Show the sins of Belshazzar, and by whom the same sins are committed now....A word-picture of the hand-writing on the wall, the king's fear, the magician's ignorance, and the queen's counsel....Read with the class the connecting verses, and point out the traits of character which they show in Daniel....The inscription and the interpretation; how it applied to Babylon: how it applies to us....What was going on outside of the walls; Cyrus the Persian; his conquest of Babylon....The fate of the king and the fall of the city....Against what sins does this lesson warn us?...What traits in God's character does it show?

References. FREEMAN. Ver. 9: Feasts for the women, 390. Ver. 4: The use of metal, 594. Ver. 10. Neck chains, 476. Ver. 11: The Magi, 630; astrologers, 520.

Songs from the Epworth Hymnal.

92. Deep are the wounds which sin has made.
96. Come, ye sinners, poor and needy.
107. Hasten, sinner, to be wise.
108. Jesus is calling.
109. Depth of mercy.
113. God calling yet.
118. Pleading with thee.

Primary and Intermediate.

LESSON THOUGHT. *God's Eye Upon Us.*

REVIEW. Recall the teaching about Babylon, the idolatry of the people, the pride and luxury of its kings and princes, etc. Tell that Nebuchadnezzar repented and turned to God before his death, and that now another king, Belshazzar, was ruling in Babylon, who was a proud, wicked, idolatrous king. Tell that armies from Media and Persia were just outside the gates of the city, watching their chance to get in, but that Belshazzar was not afraid, because he thought his city was strong. Teach that there is no place of safety for any one who is disobeying God.

THE GREAT FEAST.

Describe the great feast the king made for his nobles and great men. Tell how the holy vessels that had been taken from the temple at Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar were taken out, and these wicked men drank wine out of them. Tell how they praised their gods of gold and silver and brass, and made themselves very merry in denying the true God, who was all the time looking upon them in sorrow and in anger.

THE STRANGE MESSAGE.

Tell how the king began to grow pale and troubled. What did he see? Just the fingers of a hand writing on the wall! All the people saw some words there which they could not understand. Tell how the wine-drinking and the mirth ceased, and all were eager to know what it meant. Tell the story simply, but graphically. It was God speaking to these people. They had been looking at their own power, their own pleasure; now they had to turn and look at God! We never want to look at God when we are not obeying him.

THE MESSAGE MADE PLAIN.

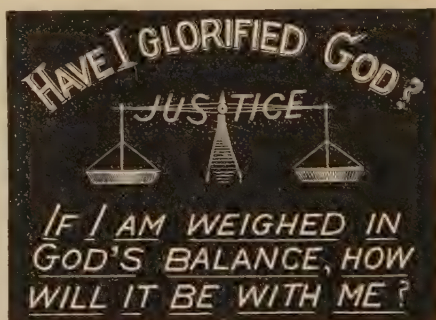
Tell how Daniel came to be sent for, and how he interpreted the message to the king. Even

after the king heard it, he went on with his feast, thinking, perhaps, it might not be true. Tell how it came true that very night, and Babylon fell into the hands of the enemy, and Belshazzar was slain.

LESSON FOR US. Teach that God sends messages to us. They are not written on the wall, but they are written in the Bible, and spoken by our friends and teachers. Do we listen? Do we obey? God's eye is upon us when we work, and when we play. We are always safe when we are obeying him.

Blackboard.

BY J. B. PHIPPS, ESQ.



EXPLANATION. One of the charges brought against Belshazzar was that he had not glorified God. This charge might truthfully be brought against many of us. If I am weighed in God's balances, how will it be with me? During the past week have I glorified him by even one act? Has my life glorified him?

BELSHAZZAR

CHARGED.	SENTENCED.
PROUD-HEARTED.	WEIGHED!
GOD-DEFYING.	WANTING!
IDOL-PRAISING.	DOOMED!
INTEMPERATE.	

Lesson Word-Pictures.

What a feast in the great banquet-room of the royal palace! What a glitter of costly vessels, of yellow gold, of snowy silver, and what answering flashes from the sparkling wine! What an array of banqueters in rich and shining robes! What a host, even a thousand lords, does the king entertain! The king is drinking, when suddenly, does he set down his goblet? He is thinking—not very much of which is *done* while people are drinking. From a quarrelsome people in a stubborn fortress, down in little Judea, did not his father take a quantity of gold and silver vessels, choice ware used in a certain temple of an uncertain god? How would it do to try those vessels? "Ho!" some one may have said, "Those Jew-vessels! What do the Jews amount to? What's the good of a Jew? Bring in the vessels, O king!" They are brought in, the holy vessels consecrated by use in the temple. In what solemn services to Jehovah's praise they may have taken part! By what honored, anointed hands they may have been lifted. They are brought into this atmosphere of riot. They are filled with wine, over which an idolatrous incantation may have been pronounced. They are greedily

lifted and emptied by the bacchanals. O what a riot in the great banquet-room! They shout, they sing—that mob of king, princes, wives, concubines—they poise aloft the cups of maddening wine, then eagerly toss them off. They praise the gods of gold, of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, of stone. Where is the God of the Jews? What did he do for his temple when Chaldean's proud armies surrounded Jerusalem? Down with the Jews! As for their boasted God—but look! What is the matter with the king? Has he been transfixed by some javelin hurled by an assassin? On the king's face, why that look of horror, a look directed toward the wall of the king's palace—on the wall high up—yes, just there, over against the great, flaming candlestick! Others are looking. The rioters rest their goblets on the table. All over the banquet-room there are faces turned up in surprise, wonder, fear, toward the wall upon which an awful hand is writing! The king could

see the hand going up, going down, going on! His knees tremble. His thoughts seem to forsake him. He can only look in dumb terror. Silence all over the hall save as some maddlin cry is raised, or as a person shrieks, "Look there! See! See!" The king has found his voice now. He is shouting for the wise men. Ho-ho! A robe of scarlet, a chain of gold, the third office in the kingdom, to the man who reads that awful inscription! The wise men come, look, shake their heads, and retire baffled. Ah, the queen thinks of a wise man, great in Nebuchadnezzar's days! Some astute old Chaldean probably. Bring him in! He comes and there he stands, not a Chaldean, but a forgotten Jew! Against that background of idolatrous riot, the prophet stands out in all the grandeur of his character and office, and looking up, Daniel, the Jew, reads what the despised God of the Jews had written on the wall.

B.C. 536.]

LESSON VIII. THE SECOND TEMPLE.

[Feb. 21.]

Ezra 1. 1-4, and 3. 8-13. [Commit to memory vs. 2-4.]



1 Now in the first year of Cy'rus king of Per'si-a, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Je're-m'ah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cy'rus king of Per'si-a, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying,

2 Thus saith Cy'rus king of Per'si-a, The LORD God of heaven hath

given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him a house at Je-ru'sa-lem, which is in Ju'dah.

3 Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Je-ru'sa-lem, which is in Ju'dah, and build the house of the LORD God of Is'ra-el (he is the God), which is in Je-ru'sa-lem.

4 And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with vessels, besides the free-will offering for the house of God that is in Je-ru'sa-lem.

8 Now in the second year of their coming unto the house of God at Je-ru'sa-lem, in the second month, began Ze-rub'ba-bel the son of She-al'ti-el, and Jesh'u-a the son of Jo'z'a-dak, and the remnant of their brethren the priests and the Le'vites, and all they that were come

out of the captivity unto Je-ru'sa-lem; and appointed the Le'vites, from twenty years old and upward, to set forward the work of the house of the LORD.

9 Then stood Jesh'u-a with his sons and his brethren, Kad'mi-el and his sons, the sons of Ju'dah, together, to set forward the workmen in the house of God: the sons of Hen'a-dad, with their sons and their brethren the Le'vites.

10 And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Le'vites the sons of A'saph with cymbals, to praise the LORD, after the ordinance of Da-vid king of Is'ra-el.

11 And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the LORD; because he is good, for his mercy endureth forever toward Is'ra-el. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid.

12 But many of the priests and Le'vites and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundations of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy:

13 So that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people: for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off.

General Statement.

The period of captivity for Judah was seventy years from the time when, in the reign of Jehoiakim, the land fell under the Chaldean yoke and its nobles were taken to Babylon, and fifty years from the destruction of the temple and the city by Nebuchadnezzar. Severe as was the trial to lose their land, to dwell as exiles in a strange country, the results of the captivity proved that it was perhaps the greatest benefit to Israel of any event in its history. Over the events of those fifty years beside the rivers of Babylon a blank has fallen, and scarcely a fact can be stated. But it made an impress upon the people which has not left them unto this day. They went into exile a weak, fickle people, ever prone to wander from their God, ever falling into idolatry. They came back from their exile thoroughly changed, with such an intense devotion to their religion and national traits that all the power of the world during the centuries since has not caused them to waver. From this time we read no longer of Baal, or the groves, or the high places, but instead, of an intensity of service for Jehovah which at

times became narrow and bitter toward other nations. In former times they had neglected their written law to such a degree that for centuries it was lost, but henceforth they were to concentrate all their intellectual energies upon the Scriptures. They had formerly left the house of God to ruin, and built shrines to idols on every hill; but now the temple became the center of their thought, and to strengthen their devotion, the synagogue—an outgrowth of the exile—stood in every village, and was diligently attended by every family. What was still more remarkable, this great change not only affected the section of the Jews who returned to their own land, but also that portion, ten times as great, which remained by choice in foreign lands as the Jews of the Dispersion. All we know is that consequent upon the labors of Ezekiel, Daniel, and other unnamed prophets, a great revival was wrought, and a new Israel arose out of the ashes of the old. Our lesson opens just at the time when the captives returned to rebuild their ruined city and their destroyed temple.

Explanatory and Practical Notes.

Verse 1. In the first year. Not the first year of Cy'rus's reign over the Persians, of whom he was the hereditary king; nor the first year after the capture of Babylon, for he allowed Darius the Mede to be the nominal king for a time before taking the sovereignty into his own hands. Cy'rus king of Persia. He was the king of the Persians, who at that time were subject to their neighbors, the Medes. Cy'rus reversed the relations of the two tribes, but for a time permitted the Median king to be joint ruler with himself. He conquered all the lands from India to the Mediterranean, in-

cluding all Asia Minor, and founded the largest empire of the ancient world. He was slain on an expedition against India, and his tomb is still shown at Pasargadae, now Murg-aub. It was his mission to consolidate the kingdoms of the East, to break up the old Asiatic forms of idolatry, and by substituting the purer monotheism (or worship of one God) of the Persians, to open the path for the true faith. Though ambitious, he was generous to his captives and just in his government; the best type of an Oriental despot. That the word of the Lord. Though unconscious of his destiny,

Cyrus was the hammer of God, breaking the chains of his people and the idols of the Gentile world. **By the mouth of Jeremiah.** The prophecy of the "seventy years of captivity" was given in a letter (Jer. 29) to the captives in Babylon, before the final destruction of the city of Jerusalem. **The Lord stirred up.** Probably the agent of God in this matter was the aged Daniel, who had perhaps aided Cyrus in his conquest, and was treated by the conqueror with great respect. It is said by Josephus that Daniel urged this act of mercy and justice, and pointed out to Cyrus the prophecies concerning himself. (1) *How noble is the work of leading the thoughts of men to God's word! Made a proclamation.* This proclamation of Cyrus has left results in history larger than all his conquests. (2) *Deeds for self die, but those for God abide forever.*

2. The Lord God of heaven. This is the Jewish translation of the proclamation, which in the Persian original may have been, "Ormazd the God of heaven." **Given me all the kingdoms of the earth.** This was scarcely an exaggeration, for nearly all the civilized world of that era was comprised in the Persian Empire. Rome was an inconsiderable city, Athens was just beginning its history, and England was an unknown wilderness; while the empire of Persia embraced all the territory from the Indus to the Nile and the Ægean, and from the Black Sea to the Great Desert. **He hath charged me.** The reverential tone of this proclamation is in full accord with all the ancient inscriptions of Cyrus. (3) *Let us not sink below the intelligence of this heathen by forgetting Him, who gives us all things. To build him a house.* That is, to rebuild the temple which had been destroyed fifty years before. (4) *What dwelling-place for God can we build to-day?*

3. Who is there among you. The proclamation was addressed to the Jews and Israelites, who were dispersed in little communities all through the Persian Empire. **His God be with him.** God's blessing is invoked upon all who enter upon the work. **Let him go up to Jerusalem.** As the carrying away of the captives had taken place at intervals of from seventy to fifty years before, there were but few of the original exiles remaining, and it is somewhat remarkable that so many of their descendants, fifty thousand in all, should be willing to go to a country which they had never seen. **Build the house.** This was their great errand, not to build their own houses, but the house of God. (5) *Let us have the noble purpose to share in some work for God which shall endure when we have passed away. He is the God.* We can understand this great truth far more clearly than could Cyrus. (6) *Let us see that we live out the knowledge which we possess.*

4. Whosoever remaineth. That is, all the exiles who were still living, not those who chose to remain in their homes. **Let the men of his place.** This refers especially to the Jews who did not return to Palestine, who were ten times the number of those who returned. **Help him.** Those who cannot work for God's house should give all the more toward it, but the working is better than the giving. **Besides the free-will offering.** This was probably the gift of Cyrus himself from the royal treasury.

5. The lesson omits the account of the journey and the list of the families. On their arrival at Jerusalem their first act was to rebuild the altar on the old site, and begin the daily sacrifice. **In the second year.** They delayed for a year to begin the building of the temple, perhaps because houses for themselves were needed, and some defenses against enemies. It may be that it was requisite also to wait for building materials from Lebanon. Still a comparison of this record with the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah shows that there

was some dereliction of duty on the part of the people and their rulers. **Zerubbabel.** His name means "born in Babylon." He was the descendant of David through the double line of Solomon and of Nathan, and hence was the lineal head of the nation, as well as their governor appointed by the Persian king. **Jeshua the son of Jozadak.** Called also "Joshua the son of Josedech." He was the high-priest, and representative of the line of Aaron. **The remnant of their brethren.** Rev. Ver., "the rest of their brethren;" referring to the priests and the Levites, or descendants of Levi. **Appointed the Levites.** Those of the Levites who had returned from captivity were placed in charge of the building of the temple, as they were the priestly tribe. **From twenty years old.** This was in accordance with the rule established by David. 1 Chron. 23. **24. To set forward the work.** By taking charge of the contributions and directing the builders.

9. Then stood Jeshua with his sons. From Chap. 2. 40, we see that this was not the high-priest, but a Levite of the same name. **Kadmiel and his sons.** We know only the names of these men, but it is to be noticed that we should not even know their names if they had not given their hearts to God's work. **The sons of Judah.** Elsewhere called Hodaviah. Chap. 2. 40. **To set forward the workmen.** Rev. Ver., "to have the oversight of the workmen."

10. When the builders laid the foundation. This was the official service at beginning the work, like our corner-stone laying. **The temple of the Lord.** We know very little of this second temple, but it probably resembled the first; with a large open court in which rose the house, which had a lofty tower on the front, two principal rooms, the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies; and apartments for the priests around the building. **The priests in their apparel.** The priests wore a linen tunic, fastened around the waist with a girdle. **The sons of Asaph.** Asaph was a leader of music and writer of psalms in David's time, and his descendants formed the choral bands of the temple. **After the ordinance of David.** One characteristic of this new period upon which the Jews entered with the restoration was the desire to fashion all their religious customs after ancient precedents and patterns.

11. They sang together by course. That is, in antiphonal choruses, one section singing the first part and the other the second of a stanza. Thus one would sing, "Give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good," and the other would respond "For his mercy endureth forever." (7) *We can always see God's goodness if we will look for it. Because the foundation.* For in the foundation they recognized God's past mercies in bringing them back to their own land, and the promise of his continued grace.

12. Ancient men, that had seen the first house. The first temple was destroyed about fifty-one years before the date of these events, so that some who had witnessed it might be present. **Wept with a loud voice.** Their weeping was in mingled sorrow and joy; sorrow over the memories of the past, and joy with hopes for the future. Probably, too, they contrasted the former temple in its splendor with the lack of adornment in the plans of the new one. (8) *We live in a world where joy and sorrow are ever mingled.*

13. The people could not discern. The praises and the weepers were both loud in their manifestations, and their sounds were blended. Even while we rejoice over the divine renewal of the fleshly temple, we may not forget the ruin into which it had fallen.

HOME READINGS.

- M.* The second temple. Ezra 1. 1-4; 3. 8-11.
Tu. The preparations made. Ezra 1. 5-11; 3. 1-7.
W. The first temple. 1 Kings 6. 1-30.
Th. The building suspended. Ezra 4. 11-24.
F. The work resumed. Ezra 6. 1-12.
S. The temple dedicated. Ezra 6. 13-22.
Sa. The goodness of God. Psalms 136. 1-26.

GOLDEN TEXT.

They praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid. Ezra 3. 11.

LESSON HYMN. 11.

Hymnal, No. 868.

We rear not a temple, like Judah's of old,
 Whose portals were marble, whose vaultings were gold;
 No incense is lighted, no victims are slain,
 No monarch kneels praying to hallow the fane.
 More simple and lowly the walls that we raise,
 And humbler the pomp of procession and praise.
 Where the heart is the altar whence incense shall roll,
 And Messiah the King who shall pray for the soul.

TIME.—536 B. C. The first year of Cyrus alone. 70 years since 606. Captivity ended. 61st Olympiad. Year of Rome. 217.

PLACES.—Jerusalem, Babylon, possibly Susa.

RULERS.—Cyrus, king of Persia. Servius Tullius at Rome.

CONNECTING LINK.—Darius, who governed Babylon, has died. Cyrus is alone king. Daniel has been brought out from his retirement, and made one of the king's chief counselors. It was possibly he who brought to the notice of Cyrus the prophecies made one hundred years before his birth. At all events he issues the edict which fulfills the prophecy. Forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty Jews returned to Jerusalem.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—The call of the Gospel.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. A Charge to Cyrus, v. 1, 2, chap. 1.

What prophet had foretold the call of Cyrus to a work for God?

What was Jeremiah's prophecy concerning the captivity?

Who was there in the court of Cyrus that was very familiar with these prophecies?

What position did he occupy in the kingdom?

Knowing the prophecies, how would he naturally use his power?

If Daniel did influence Cyrus to this act, does the fact contradict the statement of ver. 1?

2. A Call to Israel, v. 3, 4, chap. 1.

How general a permission did Cyrus give to Israel?

What were those who went to do?

What were those who remained to do?

How many answered to this call, and went back to Jerusalem? Ezra 2. 64.

What beautiful story—that makes a book of the Bible—would have never been told if every one had gone back to Jerusalem?

3. A Thanksgiving to God, v. 8-13, chap. 3.

Of what was this thanksgiving a celebration?

Of what did the public service of thanksgiving consist?

Why did they praise the Lord? (See Golden Text.)

Why should so many have wept on this joyful occasion?

In what respects was this an occasion for sorrow?

What other service of thanksgiving had occurred in the history of this people?

Practical Teachings.

How does this lesson teach that men and nations are only God's servants working his will.

On every one God lays his special duty, either to go, to do, or to give. What has he laid on you?

The lasting effect of sin? It brings tears into the midst of rejoicing.

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. A Charge to Cyrus, v. 1, 2, chap. 1.

Who was king of Persia?

Whose downfall had Jeremiah prophesied? Jer. 25. 2.

Whose deliverance had he promised? Jer. 29. 10.

How did the Lord bring about its fulfillment?

What acknowledgment did Cyrus make?

What charge had he received?

2. A Call to Israel, v. 3, 4, chap. 1.

What question did Cyrus ask?

Where did he wish the people to go?

For what purpose?

To whom were they to look for help?

What command did he lay upon their neighbors?

For what purpose were the offering to be made?

3. A Thanksgiving to God, v. 8-13, chap. 3.

When did the rebuilding of the temple commence?

Who directed the work?

Who assisted him?

What preparation was made after the foundation was laid?

What song of thanksgiving was sung?

Who joined in the thanksgiving?

What building had many of the old men seen?

How were they affected?

Teachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson do we learn—

1. That God moves men's hearts to do his will?

2. That God remembers his people in their trouble?

3. That the prosperity of God's house is a joy to his people?

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

What came from the Lord to King Cyrus? Word to build the house of the Lord at Jerusalem.

What notice did the king give throughout the kingdom? That all the Jews were free.

What did he charge them to do? To go up to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple.

What was his command to his own people? That they help the poor Jews to go with the rest.

How were they to help them? With money, cattle and goods.

What was given the Jews for the temple? A free will offering from the king.

What was that offering? The gold and silver vessels that Nebuchadnezzar carried away from the temple.

Who led the Jews back to their own land? Zerubbabel, chief ruler, and Jeshua, high-priest.

What was first rebuilt? The altar of sacrifice.

What was offered unto the Lord? Sacrifices and burnt offerings.

When were the foundations of the temple laid? In the second year of their freedom.

Who were gathered together at that time? The priests, the Levites, and the people.

How did they praise God for his goodness? With songs and music.

What did the people do? They shouted with joy.

[Repeat the GOLDEN TEXT.] Who wept and mourned? Many of the priests and the old men.

For what did they weep? For the lost glory of the temple and of Israel.

Words with Little People.

God was watching those lowly, sorry captives *all the time*, and as *soon as he knew it was best*, he heard their prayer for forgiveness and set them free. They were so glad to get home and *begin again*, that they sang songs and fairly shouted for joy. When they commenced to build their temple again, how did they feel? See GOLDEN TEXT.

No temple was ever built that God so loved to come and *stay in* as in a little clean heart.

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

[For the entire school.]

1. Who permitted the Jews to return from captivity? **Cyrus, the king of Persia.**

2. Who led the Jews back to their own land? **Zerubbabel.**

3. What did they first build after their return to Jerusalem? **The altar of the Lord.**

4. What foundation did they lay in the second year? **The second temple.**

5. What is said of them in the Golden Text? **They praised, etc.**

TEXTS AT CHURCH.

Morning Text.....

Evening Text.....

ANALYTICAL AND BIBLICAL OUTLINE.

The Spirit of the Temple Builder.

I. THE BELIEVING SPIRIT.

That the word....might be fulfilled. v. 1.

"We also believe, and therefore speak." 2 Cor. 4. 13.

II. THE OBEDIENT SPIRIT.

He hath charged me to build. v. 2.

"Not disobedient unto the....vision." Acts 26. 19.

III. THE WORKING SPIRIT.

Let him go up ...and build. v. 3.

"Do it with thy might." Eccl. 9. 10,

IV. THE GIVING SPIRIT.

Help....with silver and with gold. v. 4.

"God loveth a cheerful giver." 2 Cor. 9. 7.

V. THE WORSHIPING SPIRIT.

They set the priests in their apparel. v. 10.

"Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness."

1 Chron. 16. 29.

VI. THE GRATEFUL SPIRIT.

They sang together.... giving thanks. v. 11.

"A good thing to give thanks." *Psa.* 92. 1.

VII. THE JOYFUL SPIRIT.

Many shouted aloud for joy. v. 12.

"Your joy no man taketh from you." *John* 16. 22.

THOUGHTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

The Work of the Church.

1. The work of God's Church requires first of all that somebody's spirit be stirred up. v. 1. Every revival begins in some one heart; every plan for the up-building of the kingdom comes from some one who has been quickened in his spiritual nature.

2. The work of God's Church requires self-denial. v. 2-4. Some must give, and some must work; and all must make sacrifices for God's cause. You may not be able to work, then give. You may not be able to give, then work; and show your interest in the cause.

3. The claim of God's Church is among the very highest. We should not wait until our own houses are paid for, before we begin work on God's house. Let us arise and build at once. v. 8.

4. Those who labor in God's cause need encouragement, and should feel that the Church is by them, with its moral support. v. 9, 10. When a fireman was climbing a house to save a child all the crowd stood breathless, until one shouted, "If you want him to succeed, cheer him on!"

5. God's work is a glad some, joyful work. Let us enter upon it, and carry it through with a holy joy; happy that we have the privilege of working with our great Helper. v. 11-13.

English Teacher's Notes.

THE scene of our last three lessons has been laid in Babylon. To-day we turn our eyes again to Jerusalem, and find there a remnant of Jews who have returned from Chaldea, to settle in their own country. Yet our subject is not this remnant and their return from the seventy years' captivity; it is the "second temple." For the purpose of Cyrus in sending out the decree for the restoration of the Jews was simply this, to "build the house of the Lord God of Israel" (chap. 1. 2) at Jerusalem. This was the charge which he believed Jehovah had laid upon him, and this was what the prophet Isaiah had foretold of him, that he should rebuild the city and the temple of God—the city for the sake of the temple, while the Jewish remnant was restored for the sake of the worship of their God.

And accordingly we find that the first work undertaken by Zerubbabel, Jeshua, and those who came with them was the building of the temple. The returned exiles went each man, as it appears, to his old home and inheritance, and dwelt "in their cities," gathering together, however, at Jerusalem to worship God, to offer sacrifices on the brazen altar, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. But no steps were taken to build up the walls or restore the old splendor of Jerusalem. The money that had been given by Cyrus, and the offerings of the Jews themselves, was handed over to "carpenters and masons," and, as once before in Solomon's time, the products of the land were exchanged for timber

from Lebanon to be floated down from Sidon to Joppa, for the building of the house of God. *Ver.* 7.

Then, when the material had been prepared, the great work was begun, and the foundations of the second temple were laid. And on this occasion three voices were heard, three different sounds rose up. The Golden Text directs our attention to one of these, and we shall find the two others equally emphasized in the passage.

1. *The voice of praise.*

This, being part of the solemn worship of God, was specially arranged for beforehand. The priests were there in their sacred apparel with the silver trumpets, ordained for use "in the day of your gladness, and in your solemn days, . . . over your burnt-offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace-offerings." *Num.* 10. 10. The Levites "the sons of Asaph," a hundred and twenty-eight of them, were there with their cymbals, as in the days of David, when they were set apart for this service. *1 Chron.* 16. 4, 5, 7, 37; 25. 1, 2. And as the foundations of the house were being laid they sang together "in courses," the cymbals clashing, and the trumpets sounding, to the praise of Him whose "mercy endureth forever," perhaps in the words of one of those psalms "for Asaph," such as the 75th or the 81st.

2. *The voice of joy.*

But there was not only the set form of praise. There was the spontaneous shout of exultation and gladness. If the Jews existed as a nation at all, they existed as the nation of Jehovah. The temple of God was to them the first and chief thing. To be without a temple was to be without their one distinguishing feature, their glory and their pride. The young people who stood by as the foundations were laid had doubtless heard of the old splendor of their city and the magnificence of the former temple. A glowing future now rose up before them, and with the ardor and enthusiasm of youth they shouted for joy—a fitting accompaniment to the song of praise. But with these two voices was mingled a third:

3. *The voice of mourning.*

The company assembled on the hill of Moriah stood amid a scene of desolation, a ruined city. How different from past days such as the old men among them could remember—when Jerusalem was "built as a city that is compact together," flourishing, populous, magnificent, with strong walls and noble gates! And they themselves were but a small proportion of the nation, a little band of pioneers, looked down upon by the surrounding peoples. Of the "singers" appointed originally to the service of praise, there was but one family present, as we learn from chap. 2. 41: the families of Heman and Jeduthun (*1 Chron.* 25. 1-6) being unrepresented. And to those who had seen the first temple in all its glory, the image of the past was more vivid than any vision they might conjure up for the future, and they could not restrain their weeping for what had been lost.

We cannot wonder at their sorrow. Yet the thought

which formed the key-note to the song of praise should have dried their tears and enabled them to look forward instead of backward: "His mercy endureth forever toward Israel." What Jehovah had been in the past, that he would be in the future.

The "I am" could not change. And although the promise was not yet given that the glory of the latter house should be greater than that of the former (Hag. 2. 9), yet those who had seen the wondrous ways of God during their seventy long years of exile had every thing to hope from that "mercy" which was "forever." We know how, by the coming of the Son of God in the flesh, all the splendor of the former was immeasurably eclipsed; and although the ark was gone, and the Shekinah was gone, yet in the fullness of time God indeed tabernacled among men, and filled that house with his glory.

These three voices, mingled together when the foundation of the second temple was laid, are still continually mingling in the world round about us. There is the voice of joy—heard, perhaps, most commonly from the young, from those who have life before them, and are full of hope and energy. Will this be lasting? Only if it is based on the knowledge of God and the promises of God. Where Christ is, there only is joy true and right. Then the voice of sorrow—the lament over that which is past and gone. What can still it? Only the knowledge of God and faith in him. It is Christ who gives "joy for mourning" (Isa. 61. 3), and offers a brighter future than the very brightest past. And the voice of praise—heard too little, but never wholly silent. What inspires this? Again, the knowledge of God, that "his mercy endureth forever toward Israel." And let us bear in mind that where this goes on continually, the voice of mourning will eventually have to yield to the voice of joy.

Berean Methods.

Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

It might be well to draw or to show two maps with this lesson; first the map representing the lands of the captivity, and the journeys of the captives, and on it trace the route of the returning exiles from Babylon, up the Euphrates to Syria, thence southward to Palestine. Then a map of Jerusalem, showing its mountains. Locate the temple on Mount Moriah. Describe the general plan of the temple in its departments. Show how we may be builders of God's house, and what spirit the work requires. (Analytical and Biblical Outline.) For young scholars, the application of the lesson may follow the line of the "Thoughts for Young People." Our temple is the Church of Christ. Show how much we owe to it, and how we can show our love to it.

References. FREEMAN. Verse 11: Responsive singing, 259.

Songs from the Epworth Hymnal.

- 212. Marching to Zion.
- 218. Something for Jesus.
- 230. Some work to do.
- 238. Work, for the night is coming.
- 241. I love thy kingdom, Lord.
- 243. The Church's one foundation.
- 249. Jesus shall reign.

Blackboard.

BY J. E. PHIPPS, ESQ.



EXPLANATION. In making a review-talk on the lesson, in connection with the blackboard, first review the facts of the lesson in regard to the new temple. As an application of the teachings of the lesson, speak of the necessity of a sinner commencing a new life. He is in captivity, bound by fetters of sin. He has an opportunity of commencing a new life, dedicated to God. A new building must have a foundation-stone: it must be true, for on it the fate of the whole building depends. What foundation must the sinner lay when he starts to build a new life? Read 1 Cor. 3. 11: "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Rejoice if it is laid. Weep if it is not.

Lesson Word-Pictures.

Ride hard, ride hard, O couriers of the king. Take out the joyful proclamation that the house of the Lord at Jerusalem is to be built again. Shout it to the winds and let them carry out the glad announcement that God's house shall stand again on Zion. There they go, the fleet couriers. People in the city streets and in lonely country ways hear the hurrying hoof-beats of the couriers' horses. The sound reaches the scholar bending over his parchment, the farmer in the open fields, the artisan at his bench, and the merchant amid his wares. Soon, scholar, farmer, artisan, and merchant rise up and say, "Let us go up to Jerusalem and build the Lord's house." Those who stay behind bring out gold and silver, goods and beasts of burden, and some free-will offering for God's house. What streams of exultant travelers are pouring forth from city and village, with songs, with shouts, beginning the home-march for Jerusalem! The noise reaches the ear of some dying Hebrew and cheers him on his way to the heavenly Jerusalem! Home at last! Once more the exiles are at Jerusalem. They clear away the unsightly rubbish-heaps, again lay the foundation of the temple, and with solemn services celebrate the act. There are the priests in holy apparel, blowing their trumpets. There are the Levites smiting cymbal against cymbal. And the song of thanksgiving, loud and jubilant, how it rolls up above the ruined city! The old men who had seen the glory of the first house, how they weep and sob, while shouts of joy rise up, soaring high and echoing far! O happy day at Jerusalem!

Primary and Intermediate.

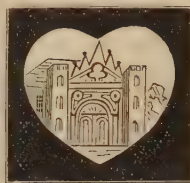
LESSON THOUGHT: *Building the Lord's House.* To be taught: 1.) That God calls his people to come home. 2.) That he wants them to build him a house. 3.) That he will live in the house that is built and kept for him.

1. Talk about the captivity in Babylon, seventy years,

and tell that this captivity was caused by sin. Sin leads us away from God, and binds our hands and hearts to keep us away from him. Now there was a new king in the country to which the Jews had been taken. Tell about Cyrus, his wisdom and kindness, and the good laws he made for his people. Tell that it was God who put it into his heart to let the Jews go back to their own land. Teach that every good, kind thought comes from God, and when we do not do as it bids us we are turning away from God. Tell that Cyrus heard God's voice and obeyed. Read the proclamation, and help children to imagine the joy of the captives. They knew that God was calling them to come home!

2. Teach that when God calls his children he always gives them something to do for him. Recall the destruction of the temple at Jerusalem, and the command to build a new one. Tell how all the gold and silver vessels belonging to the old temple were given back to the Jews by Cyrus, and how much gold and silver to help in building a new one were given them. Teach

that God wants each child to build a heart temple in which he may live. He will give all the help needed. His Book is full of the gold and silver of wisdom and truth. Will we take it? He gives his Spirit to teach us how to build. We do not know how, but he will teach us. When shall we begin?



3. Tell how the altar was first raised for worship. If we are to build for the Lord, we must begin at the place of prayer. Describe the joy of the people when the day came upon which the foundation was laid. Tell why they were so glad. They knew that God would live in

his own house. Teach that this same great God will live in the little temples we build for him. Tell the child's reply when asked, "How great is God?" "So great that he fills the universe, and so small that he lives in my heart."

B. C. 445.]

Neh. 1. 1-11.



[Commit to memory verses 8, 9.]

1 The words of Ne-he-mi'ah the son of Hach'a-li'ah. And it came to pass in the month Chis'leu, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shu'shan the palace,

2 That Han'a-ni, one of my brethren, came, he and certain men of Ju'dab; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Je-ru'sa-lem.

3 And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Je-ru'sa-lem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burnt with fire.

4 And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven,

5 And said, I beseech thee, O LORD God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him and observe his commandments:

6 Let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou mayest hear the prayer of thy servant, which

LESSON IX. NEHEMIAH'S PRAYER.

[Feb. 28.]

I pray before thee now, day and night, for the children of Is-ra-el thy servants, and confess the sins of the children of Is-ra-el, which we have sinned against thee: both I and my father's house have sinned.

7 We have dealt very corruptly against thee, and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments, which thou commandedst thy servant Mo'ses.

8 Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandedst thy servant Mo'ses, saying, If ye transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the nations:

9 But if ye turn unto me, and keep my commandments, and do them; though there were of you cast out unto the uttermost part of the heaven, yet will I gather them from thence, and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen to set my name there.

10 Now these are thy servants and thy people, whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power, and by thy strong hand.

11 O LORD, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name; and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man. For I was the king's cup-bearer.

General Statement.

This lesson belongs to a period almost a century later than the last. It represents a state of affairs in Judea very different from the early hope and joy of the returned exiles. The generation of which Zerubbabel and Jeshua were the leaders and Haggai and Zechariah were the prophets had passed away, and no great men had risen in their places. The temple had been rebuilt, though with none of its ancient splendor, and the daily sacrifice was maintained. But the Jews of Palestine were in a humiliated condition. Jerusalem was a mere unvalled village, open to attack from its enemies, and almost abandoned by its inhabitants. The Jews of Palestine were in deep poverty, and were without ambition to rise out of their wretchedness. They were neglecting the precepts and institutions of their law, were freely mingling in marriage with the Gentile and idol-worshipping peoples around, and were raising up children who could not speak their own sacred language. The Sabbath was neglected, and becoming a day of trade in the market. There was imminent danger

lest the holy seed would become extinct and the glorious hope of Israel would pass away. In that hour of need two leaders were raised up, one to bring the people back to their law, the other to inspire them with self-respect and restore their fortunes. These two men were Ezra and Nehemiah; both of whom belonged to the Jews of the dispersion, and voluntarily left their homes in the far East to aid their needy brethren. Ezra was a religious teacher, who came to reform the people in Judea and restore the law of Moses to more than its ancient authority. Nehemiah was a nobleman in high position at the court of Persia, in "Shushan the palace," who left his office to dwell among his lowly people. He journeyed twelve hundred miles to Jerusalem, undertook the control of Judea, aided the inhabitants of Jerusalem to rebuild their walls, and thus made Jerusalem again the leading city of the land. To these two earnest men the renewed prosperity of the Jewish people was due, and from these two men, the last heroes of Old Testament history, a new epoch began.

Explanatory and Practical Notes.

Verse 1. Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah. He was a Jew who occupied the important position of "cup-bearer" in the court of Artaxerxes Longimanus, king of Persia. He voluntarily left the palace in order to help his people in their own land. "Patriotism, piety, prudence, perseverance, probity, and courage," says Dr. Crosby, "equally marked his administration of affairs." Read his story as written by himself, and see how noble is the character shining through it. **The month Chisleu.** The ninth month of the Jewish sacred year, corresponding nearly with our December.

The twentieth year. Of the reign of Artaxerxes. This fixes the date at B. C. 445, or ninety-one years after the return from captivity. **Shushan the palace.** The capital of the Persian Empire, called by the Greeks Susa, situated east of the Tigris and north of the Persian Gulf, in the Zagros Mountains. The ruins of the palace referred to here, and in Lesson XI, have recently been discovered.

2. Hanani, one of my brethren. He was afterward appointed by Nehemiah the ruler over a part of Jerusa-

lem. Neh. 7. 2. **Men of Judah.** Revised Version, "out of Judah." They had come from Jerusalem, a journey not in the direct line across the Syrian desert, but northward to Tiphshah, and thence down the Euphrates River, making in all nearly twelve hundred miles, and occupying about two months. **I asked them.** Though living at ease and in honor, Nehemiah was without interest in his depressed people, for they were the people of God. **The Jews that had escaped.** Though ninety years had elapsed since the return from exile, the Jews of Palestine were still known as "those who had escaped." (1) *We should ever have in our heart a love for God's people and an interest in God's cause.*

3. The remnant... are in great affliction. This was due, partly to the enmity of the people around Judea, partly, perhaps, to misfortune, poor crops, and hard times, but most of all, as is shown by Nehemiah's narrative and Malachi's prophecy, to the apathy and religious neglect of the people themselves. **The wall... is broken down.** The wall had been destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar's soldiers one hundred and thirty-seven years before. It is not known whether it had remained in ruins since, or whether it had been destroyed again by enemies. An Oriental city is utterly defenseless while unwall'd; and until the wall was rebuilt Jerusalem could be no more than a village. To rebuild the wall, then, was the first step toward making it once more the capital. (2) *So Christ's Church, the earthly Jerusalem, needs to be so protected that foes shall be kept out and friends kept safe.*

4. When I heard. He may have known the general condition of the city before, but the recital gave the knowledge an intense reality. **I sat down and wept.** He spent a season of retirement in religious exercises expressive of sorrow. **Fasted, and prayed.** This fast was probably not absolute abstinence from food, but a denial of pleasure and of luxuries, keeping the body in fit condition for prayer. **The God of heaven.** This is a conception of God which no doubt existed among the Israelites of every age, but is especially prominent in the later books of the Old Testament, when God's people were widely scattered. (3) *Our prayers should not be altogether for ourselves, but should take in the general interests of God's cause.*

5. And said. This verse expresses the general tenor, not the precise language, of Nehemiah's prayers during four months before he made his request of King Artaxerxes, that he might be allowed to go to Judea. **The great and terrible God.** Notice that it is the "terrible" God, who at the same time **keepeth covenant and mercy.** There is no contradiction between these two clauses. One tells us of God's greatness and power; the other assures us that all that greatness and power will be used in the fulfillment of his promises. (4) *The mightier that God is, the safer his children are.* **Covenant** refers to God's definite promises; **mercy** to his loving character, which gives more than is pledged. **For them that love him.** God's love is freely given to all men, however wicked they may be. But only those who give their love in return are in condition to accept the blessings of his covenant. **Observe his commandments.** Those who love God will delight to do his will, for he asks nothing beyond what a rightly constituted nature would freely give. (5) *Teacher, call attention to these two great demands and urge them upon your scholars.*

6. Let thine ear... thine eyes. No enlightened person supposes that God is in human form, with visible eyes and ears; but some such figurative conception as this is necessary to our conditions of knowledge. **The prayer of thy servant.** Nehemiah's prayer was rather a recalling of God's promises and a confession of his people's sin than any specific petition. **Confess the sins.** Rev. Ver., "while I confess the sins." This was needful, for Nehemiah saw that the troubles of his people were in their own wandering from God. **I and my father's house.** From the prominence given to his "father's house," some have concluded, though doubt-

fully, that Nehemiah belonged to the royal line of Judah. (6) *Whoever comes before God should come humbly, not proudly.*

7. We have dealt very corruptly. Nehemiah saw very clearly, what most of his people were slow to own, that Israel had been untrue to the covenant, and deserved all its discipline at the hands of God. **The commandments... statutes... judgments.** General terms expressing the law, and referring not only to the revelation through Moses, but also to the current of spiritual teaching by the prophets, which was considered as explanatory of the law. **Thy servant Moses.** It is evident that Nehemiah was familiar with the Pentateuch or five books of Moses, for he refers to it as well known, and also quotes from it.

8. Remember, I beseech thee. God does not need to be reminded of his words, yet he desires us, for our own sakes, to remind him of them. **The word.** He cites here, freely, Deut. 30. 1-5, verses which contain the warning and the promise of God side by side. **If ye transgress, I will scatter you.** This had been accomplished, Israel had transgressed, and was now scattered widely among the nations.

9. But if ye turn. Nehemiah is anxious that the promise shall be fulfilled as thoroughly as the warning had been; and finds in the fulfillment of the threatening a ground of hope for mercy. (7) *When men turn, then God turns.* **Keep my commandments.** The best evidence of turning to God is a willingness to do his will. (8) *If you have resolved to be a Christian, then do in every respect what Christ would have you do.* **Yet will I gather them.** This promise had been fulfilled, and the Jews, once cast off, were again in their land. God's past mercies gave his servant warrant for stronger hopes.

10. Now these are thy... people. The descendants of Jacob took a just pride in the fact that they were the covenant people, the chosen heritage of God among the nations. (9) *All that in the Old Testament was the privilege of the Jew, in the New Testament is given to the Christian.* **Redeemed by thy great power.** The history of Israel was full of instances of God's power exerted in its behalf, at the Red Sea, at the river Jordan, in the conquest and the deliverances at every stage.

11. Prosper, I pray thee, thy servant. Nehemiah did not propose to let his interest in Judea and Jerusalem end with his prayers. He had formed a plan, which involved the surrender of his high office at the court, a long journey to Palestine, and a heavy task, at his own expense. His purpose was to rebuild the wall, and restore the state of Jerusalem, and he now prays for God's blessing upon his work. Nehemiah was not like those who pray eloquently for missions but do not give to them, or those who pray for revival without working for it. **Grant him mercy in the sight of this man.** His plan required the consent of King Artaxerxes to his leaving Shushan for a time at least, and his appointment as governor of Judea. **I was the king's cup-bearer.** An important officer, since he had charge of all the wines for the royal household, and stood by the king's side at every meal. He was responsible for the wine, to see that it was not poisoned, and tasted it before handing the cup to the king. Very few, even of the highest nobles, were permitted to be so near the king; and the cup-bearer was often a trusted friend of the monarch, and a valued intercessor, since he could easily present petitions to him. Yet he esteemed it a privilege to give up his place that he might help his people, and the people of God. It will well repay the teacher and the scholar to read this book, and see how Nehemiah overcame, in the prosecution of his work of rebuilding the wall and restoring Jerusalem, seven hindrances: 1. The distance—1200 miles. 2. The poverty of the Jews. 3. Their discouraged, apathetic spirit. 4. Their miserable class-strife—nobles against common people. 5. The extent of the work. 6. The opposition of enemies. 7. The general laxity of obedience to the law of God.

HOME READINGS.

- M. Nehemiah's prayer. Neh. 1. 1-11.
Tu. God's covenant with Israel. Exod. 19. 1-13.
W. The covenant broken. Exod. 32. 1-18.
Th. Sin confessed. Ps. 51. 1-19.
F. The wages of sin. Rom. 6. 7-23.
S. Turning from sin. Acts 16. 25-40.
S. Praying for help. Ps. 108. 1-13.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Give us help from trouble: for vain is the help of man. Ps. 108. 12.

LESSON HYMN. 8, 7.

Hymnal. No. 728.

What a Friend we have in Jesus,
All our sins and griefs to bear!

What a privilege to carry
 Every thing to God in prayer !
 O what peace we often forfeit,
 O what needless pain we bear,
 All because we do not carry
 Every thing to God in prayer !

TIME.—445 B. C. Almost a century since last lesson. 83d Olympiad. Year of Rome, 308.

PLACE.—Shushan, or Susa. (See Descriptive Index.)

RULERS.—Artaxerxes Longimanus, king of Persia. Rome under consuls. Judea under a provisional governor.

CONNECTING LINK.—Almost a century has gone. The Jews who returned under Zerubbabel are suffering from oppression at the hands of their enemies; the city walls are broken down, the gates burned. In great distress, and in a more pitiable condition than when captives at Babylon, their wretchedness is reported by messengers to Nehemiah at Susa. In sorrow of heart he goes to God with the prayer recorded in our lesson.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—The nature of prayer.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. A People's Need, v. 1-3.

What people does our lesson describe as in need ?
 In what respects were they in need ?
 What had brought them to this condition ?
 To whom was the story of their need brought ?
 What fact is proved concerning the feeling of the Jews in Persia for their friends in Palestine ?
 What had been the effect of the captivity on their relation to God ?

2. A Patriot's Prayer, v. 4-11.

How did Nehemiah prepare himself for this prayer ?
 What elements of true prayer appear in these words of Nehemiah ?
 What shows his patriotism ?
 What one thing does he plead as his hope ?
 How is the purpose in his heart foreshadowed ?
 What was his purpose ?

Practical Teachings.

Nehemiah sought to know the need of others, though far away from him. Do you ?

Nehemiah sought how he might relieve that need. Do you ?

Nehemiah prayed all for his loved ones, none for himself. Do you ?

Nehemiah committed his plans for others to God. Do you ?

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. A People's Need, v. 1-3.

Who speaks in this lesson ?
 Where was he living ?
 Who was his king ? Neh. 2. 1.
 What was Nehemiah's office ? v. 11.
 Who came to him in the palace ?
 What inquiries did he make of his visitors ?
 About whom did he receive news ?
 What was the condition of the people ?
 What was the condition of Jerusalem ?
 By whose order had it been destroyed ? 2 Kings 25. 8-10.

2. A Patriot's Prayer, v. 4-11.

How did Nehemiah receive the news ?
 To whom did he go for help ?
 What confession did he make ?
 What had been the offense of the people ?
 What threatening of the Lord does Nehemiah call to mind ?
 On what condition had help been promised ? Deut. 4. 29-31.
 How may every sinner be restored to God's favor ? Isa. 59. 7.
 On what ground does Nehemiah plead for God's favor to Israel ?

What special favor did he ask of the Lord ?

Teachings of the Lesson.

Where, in this lesson, are we taught—1. Sympathy with God's people in trouble ? 2. Sorrow for sin ? 3. Confidence in God's promises ?

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

Who lived in the palace of the king of Persia ? **Nehemiah, a wise and pious Jew.**

Who came to the palace ? **Some Jews from Jerusalem.**

What news did they bring of the Jews there ? **That they were poor and despised.**

What was the state of Jerusalem ? **It was without wall or gates.**

Why was this a disgrace ? **In those days a city without wall or gates was not considered a city.**

How was Nehemiah affected when he heard these things ? **He sat down and wept.**

To whom did he go in his trouble ? **To the God of Israel.** [Repeat the GOLDEN TEXT.]

What did he confess ? **His sins and those of his people.**

For what did he ask ? **For mercy and forgiveness.**

What did he pray God to remember ? **His promise to Moses.**

What was that promise ? **That he would bless the Israelites when they obeyed and worshiped him.**

What brought all their trouble upon them ? **Forsaking God.**

What had brought them prosperity ? **Obedience to God.**

How is it with us to-day ? **The same—"The word of the Lord standeth forever."**

Words with Little People.

The dearest mother, father, or friend in all the world cannot help us as Jesus can. Kind and willing as they are they cannot always and every-where be *near* to help us. But we can never be where God *cannot* and *will* not help.

"Praying is but telling Jesus
 All our want and all our woe ;
 None but Jesus can relieve us,
 None but Jesus loves us so.
 And to Jesus
 Every one is free to go."

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

[For the entire school.]

1. Who was Nehemiah ? **A nobleman at the court of Persia.**

2. When did he live ? **After the return of the Jews from captivity.**

3. In what condition was Jerusalem at that time ? **It was without gates or wall.**

4. What did Nehemiah undertake to do ? **To rebuild the wall.**

5. How did he begin ? **By seeking God's help.**

6. How is his prayer expressed in the GOLDEN TEXT ? **Give us, etc.**

7. How did he succeed in building the wall ? **By leading the people in the work.**

TEXTS AT CHURCH.

Morning Text.....

Evening Text.....

ANALYTICAL AND BIBLICAL OUTLINE.

Prayer to God.

I. NEHEMIAH'S GOD.

1. *O Lord God of heaven.* v. 5.
2. "Created the heavens and the earth." Gen. 1. 1.
3. *The great and terrible God.* v. 5.
4. "The Lord most high is terrible." Ps. 47. 2.
5. *That keepeth covenant and mercy.* v. 5.
6. "He is God, the faithful God." Deut. 7. 9.
7. *For them that love him.* v. 5.
8. "Thou shalt love the Lord." Deut. 6. 5.
9. *And observe his commandments.* v. 5.
10. "These words....shall be in thine heart." Deut. 6. 6.

II. NEHEMIAH'S PRAYER.

1. **Earnest.** "*Sat down and wept.*" v. 4.
"Effective fervent prayer....righteous man." Jas. 5. 16.
2. **Humble.** "*Fasted and prayed.*" v. 4.
"Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord." James 4. 10.
3. **Persevering.** "*Day and night.*" v. 6.
"Continuing instant in prayer." Rom. 12. 12.
4. **Confessing sin.** "*We have sinned.*" v. 6, 7.
"I will confess my transgressions." Ps. 32. 5.
5. **Recalling covenant.** "*Remember....the word.*" v. 8, 9.
"Remember the word unto thy servant." Ps. 119. 49.

THOUGHTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

The Example of Nehemiah.

1. See Nehemiah's fidelity to his father's God while in a strange land, in the temptations of the palace, and the cares of public life. Let the young man away from home follow his example.

2. See his devotedness to the interests of the Church. His first inquiry was concerning it; his prayers were in its behalf; for it he was ready to make every sacrifice.

3. See his industrious, practical spirit. Read the story of his inspecting the condition of the city, his endeavor to arouse the people to action, and his labor in rebuilding the wall. What are you doing to build up Christ's Church?

4. See his self-denying liberality. He gave up much of position and wealth for the sake of God's people.

5. See his persevering spirit, not yielding to obstacles, but overcoming them. See in the note on the last verse of the lesson "seven hinderances" over which he triumphed.

6. See also his intense zeal for a pure Church. He led the people back to an obedience to God's law, to a solemn covenant with God, to keeping the Sabbath.

English Teacher's Notes.

I HAVE just been reading how the touch of a little girl on an electric battery has resulted in the explosion and shattering of nine acres of rock in New York harbor. A stranger to the wonderful powers of nature which man has learned to utilize might have wondered what possible connection there could be between the child on the shore and the massive rock which had so long blocked up the water-way; or how that small hand could make the slightest impression upon such an invincible barrier. But the spectators who looked upon the striking scene knew that there was a hidden power, mighty enough to do the stupendous work, and yet responsive to the gentle touch of a finger. To bring about this strange combination and its marvelous result had, however, involved a large expenditure of labor and skill. In the spiritual world the matter is far simpler. We shall see in our passage for to-day what a mighty power was set in motion by a secret touch, which produced wonderful results, visible to all. Guided by the passage, let us look at three pictures.

The first verse brings before us the capital and royal residence of the monarch of the great Per-

sian Empire, "Shushan the palace," or Susa. Here dwells Artaxerxes, "king of kings," as the Persian monarchs styled themselves. Ezra 12. 7. All the nations round about are subject to him. He reigns over many climes and many tongues. His wealth is enormous, his power undisputed, his will absolute. To him will apply the words of Solomon: "Where the word of a king is there is power, and who may say unto him, What doest thou?" Eccl. 8. 4. It would seem hopeless to attempt to influence such a sovereign outside the current of his own desires and pleasures.

Our next picture is found in vers. 2, 3. Far away from the magnificent capital of king Artaxerxes lies the conquered and vassal city of Jerusalem. For long, long years it has lain prostrate. The temple, indeed, has been rebuilt, and there are some families of Jews dwelling on the site of the old city of David. But the walls are in ruins and the whole place desolate in the extreme, while the returned exiles are scorned and persecuted by the Samaritans and other tribes round about them. Who shall build again these walls, and raise this city from the dust? Who shall obtain the great king's permission to do such a thing? And who shall carry it out in the teeth of determined hostility and opposition?

Now for our third picture. We go back to "Shushan the palace." Here is one of the great king's servants, a Jewish exile, shut up in his own room. Taking advantage, probably, of the temporary absence of Artaxerxes, he has withdrawn himself from the sight and speech of others, to spend certain days in fasting, mourning, and prayer. The weeping and fasting are expressions of his grief and his self-abasement. But the prayer is something more. It is the hand raised to touch the secret spring of power.

When the little girl was to give the impulse which should shatter the huge "Flood Rock" to fragments, she might not stand just where she chose. She had to take up such a position as should enable her to lay her finger on the spring. And she had to touch that one particular spring. She might have curiously fingered much that was round about her with no particular effect. The touch might be simple and gentle, but it must be direct.

And so, if that Jewish exile, in his lonely room, wished to bring about a great and wonderful effect, such as would seem hopeless to mere human calculations, he must get into the proper position and lay his hand on the right spring.

Now look at Nehemiah's position. We have already seen him weeping and fasting. These are the outward signs; but what is the language of his soul? "We have sinned... both I and my father's house have sinned. We have dealt very corruptly," etc. He takes the sinner's place. And what does Scripture say of this? "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word," Isa. 66. 2. But further observe what he styles himself and those for whom he pleads, "These are thy servants and thy people,

whom thou hast redeemed." "Let thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant." He takes the servant's place. And what does Scripture say of this? "The Lord . . . will repent himself concerning his servants." Deut. 32. 36; Psa. 135. 14.

Now see where he lays his hand. First, on the character (or, more correctly speaking, the attributes) of God, ver. 5. And secondly, on the word of God, ver. 8, 9. There was his word to restore Israel, and there was his character—"that keepest covenant," etc. And so the right spring was touched, and the hidden power was roused which issued in the turning of the heart of the great Artaxerxes, and the building of the walls of Jerusalem, as related in the Book of Nehemiah.

The hand of a child may touch the same secret spring. There have been mightier things done by infants than the breaking up of the Flood Rock. But if the children in our classes would have within their reach the power which produces such mighty effects, they must follow the example of Nehemiah.

1. *They must take the sinner's place.* This is the first step of all. The proud, self-righteous boy or girl cannot touch the spring of power. There must be the coming of Christ for pardon, and the constant recognition and confession of unworthiness and helplessness.

2. *They take the servant's place.* God will not place his power at our disposal to use at our own pleasure. Supplies are given to a general that he may fight for his sovereign or his government, not that he may aggrandize himself. It was to his servants, who were going about his work, that Christ promised "power....over all the power of the enemy." Luke 10. 19.

3. *They must ask according to God's word.* That is, according to what he has revealed of himself, and according to his promises. With the hand on this spring, temptation may be resisted, danger escaped, the needy helped, the sorrowful comforted, and the "good fight" fought and won.

Berean Methods.

Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

In the study of this lesson do not fail to read the entire Book of Nehemiah; urge the scholars on the Sunday before the lesson to read the book, and to bring to the class their estimate of Nehemiah's character, its traits, etc. . . . Show on the map the location of Shushan, Judea, etc., and Nehemiah's journey. . . . The "Thoughts for Young People" will suggest a line of treatment, presenting Nehemiah as an example in character. An interesting story could be told of his work, and the characteristics which he showed in it. . . . Another plan might be made on the basis of the "seven hinderances" (see notes, last verse of lesson) and how Nehemiah overcame them. Show how God's workers encounter the same hinderances now. . . . Still another plan is to take up the text of the lesson and show from it "how to pray." I. The circumstances under which Nehemiah prayed. II. The God to whom he prayed, and his character as shown in this lesson. III. How he prayed. See in this line the Analytical and Biblical Outline.

References. FREEMAN. Verse 1: Chisleu, 377.. Ver. 11: The royal butler, 378.

Songs from the Epworth Hymnal.

- 13. Blessed hour of prayer.
- 119. Pass me not.
- 154. Alone with Jesus.
- 165. What a friend we have in Jesus!
- 196. Saviour, listen to our prayer.
- 194. Come, ye disconsolate.
- 198. From every stormy wind.

Blackboard.

BY J. B. PHIPPS, ESQ.

NEHEMIAH'S PRAYER TEACHES					
DRAW NEAR WITH	HO: AWE	CON:	HUM:	REV:	EA:
SIN:		CON:	PROM: CL:		
A: IM:		HELP:	G: MER:		

DIRECTIONS. Before the session of the school draw the lines that divide the board, as represented in the diagram. Write the sentence, "Nehemiah's Prayer Teaches," but leave every thing else to be written in answer to questions.

QUESTIONS. This prayer teaches, first, that I must [write] *Draw Near*. How? With *Holy Awe*. [Write, *Ho, Awe*.] With what else? *Confidence, Humility, Reverence, Earnestness*. [Write these words as abbreviated, and have some one scholar or teacher show from Nehemiah's prayer these teachings.] This prayer teaches another thing: who can tell what it is? [Ans, *We must pray confessing sin*.] And yet something else? [Ans, *Claiming the promises*.] But that is not all; what else? [Ans, *Asking immediate help*.] Lastly, the lesson teaches *God's Mercy*.

NOTE.—When all the answers have been written as abbreviated on the board, then rapidly review them.

Primary and Intermediate.

LESSON THOUGHT. God, Our Only Help.

(A good preparation for teaching this lesson is a thorough study of the character of Nehemiah, the simple, devout, just, God-fearing man, who so fully trusted his own power to do any thing wise and right that he was obliged to depend upon God.) To be taught, 1.) That there was trouble in Jerusalem. 2.) That God laid this trouble upon the heart of a good man. 3.) That he taught this man where to look for help.

1. Tell that not all the Jewish captives returned to their own land; some still remained in Persia. Among these was a man named Nehemiah. He was cup-bearer to the king. But he prayed to the true God, and his heart was with his people in their work of building the temple. Tell that the Jews were not allowed to build it in peace. Enemies rose up to prevent them, so that they were a long time in building it. When it was done, they were not allowed to build the walls around Jerusalem, to keep their enemies out. This made a great deal of trouble for the Jews.

2. Tell about the visit which some of the Jews made to Nehemiah, and the sad story they told about the broken-down walls of their beloved city, and its gates burned with fire. Show that Nehemiah had a true love for God, and so any wrong done to God's house troubled him. Teach from this example that real love for God will make us sensitive to any slight put upon him. To disobey God is to slight him; to choose our way before his is to slight him. Let us be careful how we treat God.



3. Tell what Nehemiah did as soon as he heard about this trouble. Read verse 4. Ask if this was the best thing to do? Tell that Nehemiah did not know how he could help, and yet he wanted to help. Nobody could tell him what to do but God. Call for Golden Text,

and tell what the last clause means. Tell some simple story illustrative of the way in which God enlightens the mind in answer to prayer, and teach that he will do it for a child as soon as for a wise man. Let this lesson strongly impress the wisdom of going straight to God in any time of trouble and waiting to see what he tells us to do, and then obeying his voice!

Lesson Word-Pictures.

Who are these approaching Nehemiah, "in Shushan the palace" of the king? They are Jews, and among them is Hanani. What a sad story they tell! It is about a ruin-heap far away, Jerusalem, the beloved. How humbled are her once goodly walls! How black and fire-ravaged her once strong gates! What a feeble remnant straying over those walls and stealing through the blackened gate-ways! One word from the great Persian king would lift prostrate Zion out of her ash-heaps; and Nehemiah is the king's cup-bearer. Will Nehemiah speak to him? Not yet. To a higher King he must go first. In some isolated room, there he weeps and fasts. There in thought he goes over the ruins of Jerusalem, from street to street choked with rubbish, from gate-way to gate-way subdued by the fire, with bowed head and clasped hands confessing Israel's sin and begging forgiveness. Will not God give him power to plead with Artaxerxes? From the presence of God he goes to the presence of the king, and there holds out the golden goblet that Artaxerxes loves.

LESSONS FOR MARCH, 1886.

MARCH 7. Reading the Law. Neh. 8. 1-12.

MARCH 14. Esther's Petition. Esther 4. 10-17, and 5. 1-3.

MARCH 21. Messiah's Messenger. Mal. 3. 1-6, and 4. 1-6.

MARCH 28. First Quarterly Review.

At Home.

... The Sunday-school of St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church, of Cincinnati, Ohio, prints a full programme for every session, introducing a variety of exercises. Thus, in the "Order of Service" for one Sunday—which is a sample of several before us—we find an essay by one of the older scholars, a vocal solo, a recitation by a boy, the lesson-story told by a little girl, an address by one of the teachers, with songs by the different departments. Yet the study of the lesson is not neglected, for it occupies a prominent place in the center of the programme.

... The same church holds a prosperous Children's Hour Service, conducted by its pastor, Rev. John J. Reed, M.A. It is attended by several hundred boys and girls, weekly. In the first half of the hour, the young people take part, with recitations, readings, and music; in the latter half the pastor delivers an address on some topic relating to character. Rev. Mr. Reed has in other places, especially in New York, conducted children's meetings with great success and large results in the conversion of the young people.

Book Notices.

Metaphors in the Gospels. A Series of Short Studies. By Donald Fraser, D.D. New York: Robert Carter & Brothers. The author frankly admits in his preface that his use of the word "metaphor" is strained beyond its strict meaning to include the various figures of speech used by our Lord to illustrate the truths he taught. His "studies" are thoughtful and suggestive, and will well repay a careful reading.

My Sermon-Notes. A Selection from Outlines of Discourses delivered at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, with Anecdotes and Illustrations. By C. H. Spurgeon. From Ecclesiastes to Malachi, lxxv to cxxix. New York: Robert Carter & Brothers. Another volume from the prolific pen of the great English preacher. How he can think and say and do so much and do it so well is a marvel. These outlines will do for preachers to study, but not to copy.

A Larger History of the United States of America. to the Close of President Jackson's Administration. By Thomas Wentworth Higginson. Illustrated by Maps, Plans, Portraits, and other Engravings. New York: Harper & Brothers. This square volume of nearly five hundred pages is put out in the best style of the Harpers. From "The First Americans" to "Old Hickory" there is a long period of time included, and this period is treated by the author in eighteen chapters, in his usual felicitous style. The illustrations aid greatly in understanding the text, and a copious index finishes all.

The Unrivalled Cook-Book and Housekeeper's Guide. By Mrs. Washington. New York: Harper & Brothers. It is evident that "Mrs. Washington" is a typical name rather than real. The recipes, however, are real, and the writer seems to have cross-questioned cooks in all the civilized countries of the world, for she has them all represented here. With true patriotic pride, however, she maintains that American cookery is the best in the world.

The Cyclopaedia of Universal History. By Prof. John Clark Ridpath. Three vols. New York: Phillips & Hunt. A comprehensive history of the world has long been needed. Most of the works on this subject are either too elaborate or too brief. This work seems to meet the requirement for popular use, better than any other that we have seen. It is accurate according to the latest authorities, especially in the subjects of Oriental history, upon which recent discoveries have thrown great light. It is systematic, without being a mere skeleton, as are many universal histories. It is interesting and smooth in style. Its type is large and legible. Its pages are ample, but not so great as to make the volumes cumbersome. The large number of its engravings of places, manners, customs, and historic scenes make it attractive to all, and especially to young people, who will be led by the pictures to read the story. Those who purchase the work, not for a philosophic discussion of causes and events, but for a clear statement of the facts of history, will not be disappointed.

The Life and Times of Levi Scott, D.D., One of the Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church. By James Mitchell, D.D. With Preface by Rev. D. P. Kidder, D.D., LL.D. New York: Phillips & Hunt. Cincinnati: Cranston & Stowe. Every pure and godly life is held in remembrance; and none in more loving memory than that of Bishop Scott. This volume is largely composed of his own letters and journals, and therefore is next-door to an autobiography, a fact which gives it all the greater value. The record is most interesting, and carries with it that true breath of earnest, simple piety which was characteristic of the man.

The Lost Silver of Briffault. By Amelia E. Barr. New York: Phillips & Hunt. Cincinnati: Cranston & Stowe. This is a story of life in Texas just after the close of the late war. Every detail of the narrative and every shadow in the landscape shows a personal acquaintance with the locality and the life of that time. This writer knows how to write a story brimful of interesting incidents, and at the same time warm with the spirit of the Gospel. We commend this book as just what the Sunday-school library needs.

An Original Belle. By Rev. E. P. Roe. New York: Dodd, Mead, & Co. *Driven Back to Eden.* By Rev. E. P. Roe. New York; Dodd, Mead, & Co. Though Mr. Roe's works are generally love stories, they are something more. They always have a moral purpose, sometimes a religious aim, and they present the development of character. Not all of them are adapted to the Sunday-school library, but all of them will benefit the reader. The first of the above-named stories belongs to the epoch of the War for the Union, though it is not a war-story, and it inculcates patriotism, intelligence, and a worthy character. The second is Mr. Roe's first attempt to write for young people, a line in which we hope that he will persevere. It tells with considerable interest to the reader the story of a family who move from a city-flat to freedom in the country. Let us have more stories like this, if they will bring the unfortunates crowded in our cities to appreciate the privileges of field and forest.

Short Talks to Young Christians on the Evidences. By Rev. C. O. Brown. Chicago: F. H. Revell. A series of popular discourses, in which the evidences of the Bible are well presented. The typographical execution of the book might be improved.

The Thread of Gold. By Mrs. C. E. Wilbur. Cincinnati: Cranston & Stowe. New York: Phillips & Hunt. This book contains, in story-form, the experiences of a pastor's wife and widow; her joys and sorrows, and especially her labors among the intemperate and the lost. There is an air of sincerity in the recital which gives the impression that it is, at least, "founded upon fact."

A Summer in the Rockies. By Anna E. Woodbridge. Cincinnati: Cranston & Stowe. New York: Phillips & Hunt. This brings before us some friends in a former story, "Jessie and Ray," who now travel in new fields. Upon an interesting thread of narrative are fastened many facts about life and nature in the Rocky Mountains. A good book for the boys' and girls' department of the Sunday-school library.

Loyal to the King. By E. A. W. New York: T. Y. Crowell & Co. A young French girl while living with relatives in Scotland gains strength of character and a personal salvation. Then called home to Brittany she becomes the means of leading her parents into the same Christian life. The story is quite interesting.

Strange Stories from History for Young People. By George Cary Eggleston. New York: Harper & Brothers. We must fight fire with fire, and the wild tales which fascinate young people can be matched with as remarkable incidents in real life. Some interesting stories are contained in this volume which will be sure to interest the boys.

The Boy Travelers in South America. By Thomas W. Knox. The readers of Mr. Knox's former books, taking his boys through Asia and Africa, will welcome this book, which relates their adventures in a new field, from Panama to Terra del Fuego. The story would be interesting, even without the four hundred and more pictures which adorn its pages. This book is one of the best of the "Boy Traveler" series.

Pepper and Salt; or, Seasoning for Young Folk. Prepared by Howard Pyle. New York: Harper & Brothers. No childhood of a former generation enjoyed such a literature as is lavished upon the little people of to-day, written by the sharpest pens and illustrated by the brightest pencils. They ought to grow up very wise under such opportunities. This is a large quarto of pictures and stories, of just such nonsense blended with sense as children delight in.

Questions for Classical Students on the First Book of Caesar's Gallic War and Xenophon's Anabasis. By E. C. Ferguson, Ph.D. Boston: Ginn & Co. A useful book for a teacher, or for the student who is seeking to educate himself, as its questions will supply a teacher's place.

Up-the-Ladder Club. Round Two, School. The School in the Light-House. New York: Phillips & Hunt. Cincinnati: Cranston & Stowe. This second round needs no recommendation to those who have followed the fortunes of Charlie Macomber and his Aunt Stanshy in "Round One." The same boys are presented to us a year or two later, and we trace the growth of their character toward young manhood. A thoroughly healthful book, which will have an uplifting influence upon every boy who reads it.

Daisy Plains. By the author of "The Wide, Wide World." New York: Robert Carter & Brothers. A second generation of young people are now reading books written by this author, whose first book was altogether her best, and has been more or less repeated in the characteristics of her works since. Still there are few Sunday-school books of to-day purer, more elevating, or on the whole better written than those by Miss Warner. We can recommend this as an excellent story.

History of Christian Doctrine. By Henry C. Sheldon, Professor of Historical Theology in Boston University. Two vols. New York: Harper and Brothers. Professor Sheldon divides his subject into five historic periods, beginning with the year 70 and closing with 1885. While the Bible is, among Protestants, the acknowledged source of all doctrine, a history of the teaching of doctrines, of the opposition offered to true doctrine, and of false doctrines taught, is of great interest and value to the student. These two volumes will furnish the thoughtful reader with a scholarly guide in his researches after the truth.

The Fall of Constantinople; Being the Story of the Fourth Crusade. By Edwin Pears, LL.B. New York: Harper & Brothers. The varied controversies as to the Fourth Crusade are here admirably set forth. The part taken by the different eminent personages concerned in "the plot" is graphically portrayed, and the final fall of the great Oriental city, and the plunder to which it was subjected are vividly described.

The Land and the Book; or, Biblical Illustrations drawn from the Manners and Customs, the Scenes and Scenery of the Holy Land. Lebanon, Damascus, and Beyond Jordan. By William M. Thomson, D.D. New York: Harper & Brothers. More than twenty-five years ago we bought the first edition of Dr. Thomson's work in two modest volumes. Here we have the last of the three volumes of the new edition, the two former volumes of which have been previously noticed. The original edition was fully up to its day in typographical execution, and the superior beauty of the present edition only shows the advance of typographic and pictorial art. These three volumes are unexcelled in beauty, and stand in the first rank of authoritative works on "the Land" and "the Book" we all love to study. They should be in every Sunday-school teachers' library, as well as in the library of every Sunday-school teacher. For ministers' use they are invaluable. The numerous illustrations are not only superior specimens of wood-engraving, but accurate representations of the scenes they represent.

Parables of the Lakes; or, The Seven Stories of Jesus by the Sea of Galilee. A Sunday Book for Young Readers. By J. R. Macduff, D.D. New York: Robert Carter & Brothers. In vivid description Dr. Macduff excels. He places before his readers the scenery, the company of listeners, and the Great Teacher, in a most attractive manner. Not only "young readers," but older ones as well, may find in this book interesting and instructive reading.

Beauties of Tennyson. Twenty Illustrations. By Frederick B. Schell. Philadelphia: Porter & Coates. The poems and illustrations are alike "beauties." All lovers of poetry and of art will be glad to get this really beautiful book. The artist has caught the spirit of the poet in his attempts to depict his meaning.

The Chautauquan. Meadville, Pa.: T. L. Flood Publishing Company. With the January number of this useful monthly periodical there came a new typographical dress. Dr. Flood, the editor, promises new attractions for the year, in articles by new contributors, as well as by old ones.

The Great Poets as Religious Teachers. By John H. Morison. New York: Harper & Brothers. The office of the imagination in religion is beautifully exemplified in this work. Though we cannot fully agree with the writer in all his modes of interpretation, we are impressed with the deep reverence he brings to the discussion of his theme. The book may be read with profit.

Beyond the Grave. By Dr. Herman Cremer. Translated from the German by the Rev. Samuel T. Lowrie, D.D. With an Introduction by the Rev. A. A. Hodge, D.D. New York: Harper & Brothers. Somebody must have been napping when the title of this book was copyrighted, inasmuch as a copyright was given to the same title in 1879, in the work written by Bishop Foster. It is strange that neither the translator nor the writer of the Introduction, to say nothing of the publishers, seem to have ever heard of Bishop Foster's book. Leaving the question of the title to be settled by others, we are glad to commend this volume to the careful attention of our readers as a careful discussion of the doctrines involved.

From Boston to Bareilly and Back. By William Butler. New York: Phillips & Hunt. Cincinnati: Cranston & Stowe. It is not given to many men to found two missions in distinctive fields as widely separated as India and Mexico. It is not the privilege of many mis-

sionaries to return in advancing years to the mission fields of their youth and see the harvest waving where they plowed the soil. Yet Dr. Butler has enjoyed these rare privileges. He gives us in this book a graphic account of his visit to India, nearly thirty years after he first set foot on its soil. The volume is one of uncommon interest and of great value to our missionary work.

How Can I Be Saved? How Can I Know It? How Can I Be Kept? By Joseph Hillman. New York: Phillips & Hunt. Cincinnati: Cranston & Stowe. This little book is made up of selections of Scripture in answer to the above questions. It is helpful to the inquiring soul. Every other page is blank for the purpose of recording the "Notes and Reflections" of the reader. An excellent idea.

Harper's Young People. New York: Harper and Brothers. This elegant volume contains all the numbers of this excellent weekly for 1885. We consider it one of the best of its class, and worthy of a place upon the family table. Yet it is an open question whether the young people prefer to have so much space taken from valuable articles by engravings, fine as they are. We know of a boy who voluntarily changed his subscription to a paper of the same size, but containing more reading matter because without pictures.

The Children's Museum. A Collection of Sketches, Stories, and Poems. Illustrated with Numerous Engravings. Cincinnati: Cranston & Stowe. New York: Phillips & Hunt. Grown people, and especially grown people of literary taste, are apt to have a prejudice against books made up of short extracts. But where they have passed through an experience of reading to children, they are apt to change their views, and to regard a book of short stories, any one of which can be read at a sitting, as a useful volume to have in the family. Such a book is this, and all who read it will find it attractive to children.

Miss Belinda's Friends. By Mary Dwinell Chellis. New York: National Temperance Society and Publishing House. The temperance stories of this writer would make a respectable library by their number. This, like its predecessors, is a well written and interesting book, and may be helpful in staying the tide of intemperance.

The Sixth and Seventh Books of Thucydides. With an Introductory Essay, Explanatory Notes, and Indexes. By W. A. Lamberton. New York: Harper & Brothers. A good edition for students of an important work by one of the greatest of ancient historians. The introduction gives an interesting account of the period to which the work belongs.

Harper's Handy Series. Among the weekly issues of this series of small volumes we notice the following: *The Mahdi*. By James Darmstetter. With Portraits. *The World of London*. By Count Vassili. *Fish and Men in the Maine Islands*. By W. H. Bishop. Illustrated. *Souvenirs of Some Continents*. By Archibald Forbes, LL.D. *Old World Questions and New World Answers*. By Daniel Pidgeon, F.G.S. *In Peril and Privation*. By James Payn. Illustrated. *Malthus and His Work*. By James Bonar, M.A. *The Royal Mail*. By James Wilson Hyde. Illustrated. *Musical History*. By G. A. Macfarren. *The Wanderings of Ulysses*. By Prof. C. Witt. Translated by Frances Younghusband. *Ounces of Prevention*. By Titus Munson Coan, A.M., M.D. New York: Harper & Brothers.

